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Readers

Say ha!

digest

MAY 2015

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Editor's Note

A Funny Thing Happened To Our Humor Editor



THE OTHER DAY, our joke guru, Andy Simmons, was sifting through the bin of reader-submitted laughs when he came upon an envelope containing a typewritten letter and four \$100 bills. Many years ago, this reader had accepted payment from *Reader's Digest* for a funny anecdote that was not truly his, and he'd been racked with guilt ever since: "I consider what I did a lie and the money I have taken as stealing," he wrote. "But I have waited, shamefully, until now to do the right thing."

He included no more information—no name, no return address. We had no way to thank him or to return the funds.

Dear Anonymous Reader, please know that we donated your money to the ComedyCures Foundation (comedycures.org), a New Jersey organization cocreated by Saranne Rothberg, a cancer survivor who passionately believes that joy and laughter help us recover from illness and depression. ComedyCures delivers therapeutic humor programs to chronically ill kids and adults. Your decency and integrity pay themselves forward. ^R



I invite you to e-mail me at liz@rd.com and follow me at [facebook.com/lizvaccariello](https://www.facebook.com/lizvaccariello) and @LizVacc on Twitter.

READER
PHOTO
CONTEST

WHAT PLACE HAS YOUR HEART?

Take a picture of it, tell us why, and enter the image in our Extraordinary America Photo Contest. The photos and stories that move us the most will appear in our July/August issue. One grand-prize winner will receive \$500 and will be published, and three runners-up will receive \$125. Go to rd.com/photocontest for rules, prizes, and entry details. Don't delay: The deadline is 9 a.m. on April 27.



FROM TOP: ERIN PATRICE O'BRIEN, STEVE VACCARIELLO;
WARDROBE STYLIST: ELYSHA LENKIN

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Letters

COMMENTS ON THE MARCH ISSUE



What Does Wonder Look Like?

Wonderment is ... discovering that the picture of Antelope Canyon was shot by my baby brother. He is becoming the talented photographer he has always aspired to be.

JULI HORNE, Mesa, Arizona

The Editor's Note was touching. I've been making a list like you suggest every week for a year. It has changed my outlook on life and strengthened my 31-year marriage.

C. O., via e-mail

Funny Teacher Stories

After wiping away my tears from laughing, I decided that I would ask if this could be a regular feature in *Reader's Digest*. This was the greatest; please do it again.

SCOTT F. MAGRATH, Newbury, Vermont

Sometimes One Note Will Do

What a treat to find Joe Posnanski in the March issue! He used to work at the *Kansas City Star*, and his column was always my first choice to read.

Such warmth in a columnist's writings is rare.

JO JOHNSON, Lenexa, Kansas

Your True Stories

When I read "Kindred Spirit," I had to put my issue down for a moment to regain my composure. It's not often that 100 words can move you to tears. As the daughter, sister, cousin, and niece of American servicemen and -women, I'd like to extend my gratitude to Ms. Spargur and wish her son a safe and speedy return!

PATRICIA LEVESQUE, Plymouth, Minnesota

What Do Teachers Make?

I loved this article! I come across many people who tend to belittle the teaching profession. Teachers are heroes who make a world of difference in our youth. To all the teachers who love what you do: Kudos and keep inspiring our future generations!

GIANNIN MATIAS,

New Bedford, Massachusetts

Eliminate Ants

The author advised that a person should “spray the insecticide on the entire lawn.” If we care about our health and that of our yards, we won’t apply any kind of poisons to “the entire lawn.” Doing so to wipe out members of a largely beneficial species—and any other creatures that crawl—would be thoughtless and destructive.

EARLA POPE, *Wilmington, North Carolina*

The Man Next to Me

I found this truly inspirational: “Look, you have a choice in life ... You can either put your stuff deep in your pockets and take it to your grave, or you can help someone ... Don’t hog your journey. It’s not just for you.” Life-altering words.

GLORIA JOHNSON, *Orlando, Florida*

Sounding the Alarm on Sleep

It is gratifying that the importance of sufficient sleep is being recognized. As a person who dealt with severe insomnia for over a decade, I hope that health professionals are learning how to help those who want to get enough sleep and cannot.

IRENE EGGERS, *Wheat Ridge, Colorado*

93 Days

I have mixed feelings about Jessica Buchanan’s working in Somalia. Why go to a place everyone knows is dangerous and put people’s lives in danger to rescue her? There are a lot of less violent places that need charitable work.

KATHERINE WIXOM,

Cornelius, North Carolina

The Hearts of Soldiers

I really enjoyed this story, but I believe there is an error. It states that Corrado Piccoli was born in 1932 and enlisted in 1943. That would have made him 11 years old.

L. L., *via e-mail*

CORRECTION: *Corrado Piccoli was born in 1923. We regret the error.*

Send letters to letters@rd.com or Letters, Reader’s Digest, PO Box 6100, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1600. Include your full name, address, e-mail, and daytime phone number. We may edit letters and use them in all print and electronic media. **Contribute** Send us your 100-word true stories, jokes, and funny quotes, and if we publish one in a print edition of *Reader’s Digest*, we’ll pay you \$100. To submit your 100-word stories, visit rd.com/stories. To submit humor items, visit rd.com/submit, or write to us at Jokes, Box 6226, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1726. Please include your full name and address in your entry. We regret that we cannot acknowledge or return unsolicited work. **Do Business** Subscriptions, renewals, gifts, address changes, payments, account information, and inquiries: Visit rd.com/help, call 877-732-4438, or write to us at Reader’s Digest, PO Box 6095, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1595.



EVERYDAY HEROES



After a car plunges into a Philadelphia creek,
a small crowd gathers to help

The Strangers Who Came Running

BY ANDY SIMMONS

ON AN AUGUST afternoon last year, Pamela Rivers, 40, and her friend Rita Graham, 38, were stopped at a red light on Cobb's Creek Parkway in South Philadelphia when a white SUV traveling in the opposite direction veered across traffic in front of them. It then jumped the curb and streaked through a grassy expanse before plunging down an embankment toward Cobb's Creek. Pamela quickly pulled over, jumped out of her car, and dialed 911.

Kenny Gibson, 23, and his friend Taron Green, 25, were driving home

from a contracting job when Rita flagged them down. Kenny stopped, and the men got out of the car and peered over the cliff. The SUV had landed upside down in five feet of water. A woman's leg could be seen flailing out the driver's side window.

"I have a fear of water," Kenny says now. "I almost drowned when I was nine." Even so, he and Taron hustled down the 50-foot embankment into the murky water. "I couldn't just leave her," he adds.

The men waded out to the car ➡➡



From left: Marcell Porter, Rita Graham, and Pamela Rivers helped in the rescue.

and saw that the woman, Cheryl Allison, 61, was partially submerged. Kenny tried unsuccessfully to open the door. Then he punched out the window, slicing his hand on the glass. But when he reached in to pull out Cheryl, he found she was trapped by the seat belt.

“Run back to the truck and grab a box cutter,” Kenny yelled to Taron. Meanwhile, Kenny tried in vain to push the car onto its side to create an air pocket for Cheryl.

That’s when mechanic Marcell Porter approached the site. “I flipped into rescue mode,” he said. When Taron returned, Kenny sliced through the seat belt with the box cutter. He and Marcell tried to pull Cheryl out, but she wouldn’t budge.

Marcell shattered the rear window with a rock, hoping to extricate her from the back. Then he saw that she was still strapped in by her shoulder belt. Marcell reached for the box cutter and sliced the remaining strap in two. Kenny leaned in, grabbed Cheryl by the waist, and pulled her out feetfirst. Marcell grasped Cheryl’s legs, and they managed to

drag her lifeless body onto a rock.

“Give her CPR!” Pamela yelled down to them. But the two men had no idea what to do. “Put your mouth on her mouth and breathe,” she shouted to Marcell. And to Kenny, “Pump her chest!”

“We tried three times,” says Marcell. Finally, Cheryl burped up water and started moving her fingers. The men rolled her over onto her stomach to let out more water.

Soon an ambulance arrived and transported Cheryl to the hospital, where doctors treated her for broken ribs and a fractured sternum. They never discovered what caused her to pass out, but she assumes it had something to do with the sweltering summer heat.

Over the next few days, the five rescuers took turns visiting Cheryl in the hospital, where they shared hugs and tears. “We couldn’t believe she was all right,” says Pamela.

“It’s just amazing that these five people [came together],” says Cheryl. She stays in touch with her “angels” via frequent phone calls. “They are really beautiful people,” she says. **R**

READER
HERO

A PARK FOR MORGAN

My friend Gordon Hartman donates all profits from the professional soccer team he owns to Morgan’s Wonderland—a wheelchair-accessible theme park his daughter Morgan, who has cognitive and physical challenges, inspired. Those with and without disabilities are welcome, and anyone with special needs gets in free. **BOB MCCULLOUGH, San Antonio, Texas**

To nominate your hero, e-mail the details and your name and location to heroes@rd.com.

A Lesson Goes Viral

BY ALYSSA JUNG

AT THE END of 2014, Tulsa, Oklahoma, sixth-grade teacher Melissa Bour received a friend request on Facebook from one of her students. She didn't accept the request, but a quick browse through the girl's friends list revealed the names of dozens of kids from her classroom. Many of the students' Facebook pages were completely public, meaning even strangers could trawl through the kids' personal photos and messages.

"I saw middle fingers, students dressed inappropriately, and extremely foul language," Melissa says. "It was disturbing." When she brought up her discovery in class, the students were unfazed. So she created a post of her own.

With a bright green Sharpie, she wrote on a piece of paper in all caps, "Dear Facebook: My 12-year-old students think it is 'no big deal' that they are posting pictures of themselves ... Please help me ... [show them] how quickly their images can get around." She put a picture of the letter on her Facebook page and asked people to share it.



"I care very much about my students' reputations," says Melissa Bour, left.

In hours, it was shared 108,000 times across dozens of states and four countries. She deleted it after eight hours, but it continued to circulate. "I wanted to show them that it's on the Internet forever," she says.

As she explained the results of her experiment in class, the students' "eyes got bigger and bigger," she says. "It scared a few of them into deleting their pages completely," she says. Others have removed inappropriate posts and utilized privacy settings to manage their pages.

Her intention wasn't to scare them off social media but to push them to be mindful of what they post. Melissa says, "I tell them, 'Just because everyone else is sharing doesn't mean you have to.'" **R**

VOICES & VIEWS

Department of Wit

A Letter To Sophie (Who's Learning to Drive)

BY DAVE BARRY FROM THE BOOK
LIVE RIGHT AND FIND HAPPINESS
(ALTHOUGH BEER IS MUCH FASTER)



DAVE BARRY
is a Pulitzer
Prize-winning
author and
columnist.
This is from
his latest book.

DEAR SOPHIE,

So you're about to start driving! How exciting! I'm going to kill myself.

Sorry. I'm flashing back to when your big brother, Rob, started driving. When he turned 16 and got his driver's license, he had a marked tendency to—there is no diplomatic way to put this—drive into things.

This was never his fault. I know this because whenever he drove the car into something, he would call me, and the conversation would go like this:

Me: Hello?

Rob: Dad, it wasn't my fault.

My point, Sophie, is that just because the state of Florida

ILLUSTRATION BY JOE MCKENDRY (BARRY)

thinks you can drive a car, that doesn't mean you actually can drive a car. As far as I can tell after three decades on the roads of Florida, there isn't anybody that the Florida Department of Motor Vehicles doesn't think can drive a car. I cannot imagine what you would have to do to fail the driving test here.

DMV officer: OK, make a left turn here.

Test taker: Whoops.

DMV officer: [*Writes something on clipboard*]

Test taker: Does that mean I failed the test?

DMV officer: Nah, she's getting back up. You just clipped her.

SO TO SUMMARIZE, Sophie: Many people who lack the judgment and/or physical skills needed to safely microwave a burrito are deemed qualified by the state of Florida to operate a motor vehicle. When you get out on the road, you will be surrounded by terrible drivers. And guess what. You will be one of them. Yes, Sophie: You will be a bad driver, and not because you're careless or irresponsible but because you're a teenager, and it is a physiological fact that at your stage of brain development, you are—to use the term preferred by researchers in the field of neurological science—"stupid."

But, Dad, you're thinking, didn't you drive when you were a teenager?

Yes, I did. I got my New York State driver's license in 1963, at age 16, and I spent many hours cruising on the highways and byways and occasionally the lawns in and around Armonk, New York. But that was different, Sophie, because I drove

safely. I don't mean "safely" in the sense of "carefully." I was definitely your standard male teenage idiot. But I was a safe idiot because I was driving the safest vehicle ever built: my mom's 1961 Plymouth Valiant station wagon. It did not have modern safety features such as seat belts, air

bags, antilock brakes, or a computerized collision-avoidance system. What the Valiant had was ... inertia. I would stomp violently down on the accelerator, and basically nothing would happen for several lunar cycles because the Valiant was no more capable of acceleration than a fire hydrant. This was the only car ever manufactured that traveled faster on the assembly line than under its own power.

You could not hit anything in a Valiant. Fully mature trees moved quickly enough to get out of its way. If I were in charge, today's teenagers would be permitted to drive only if

“

*I was
definitely your
standard male
teenage idiot.
But I was
a safe idiot.*

they drove Plymouth Valiant station wagons.

Unfortunately, Sophie, I am not in charge, which means you're going to be driving on roads teeming with modern high-speed automobiles operated by incompetent idiots such as (no offense) yourself. To prove that you're qualified to do this, the state of Florida will make you take a test based on the information found in the official *Florida Driver's Handbook*.

But there's a big difference between how the *Florida Driver's Handbook* says you should drive and how actual humans drive in Florida. So I've prepared this Reality-Based Florida Driver's Q&A:

Q: If I arrive at an intersection at the same time as another motorist, who goes first?

A: You do.

Q: But what if ...

A: There is no "what if." *You go first.*

Q: Florida law strictly prohibits texting while driving. Does this law apply to me?

A: Ha-ha! Of course not.

Q: If I stop at a red light, how will I know when it turns green?

A: You will hear honking behind you. This is your cue to start wrapping up your current text—unless, of course, it is important.

Q: When I come to a stop sign, do I need to stop?

A: You personally?

Q: Yes.

A: No.

Q: How is the turn signal used in Florida?

A: It is used to indicate to other motorists that you do not realize your turn signal is blinking.

Q: My car's engine seems to have stopped, and I hear a "burbling" noise. What could be causing this?

A: Are you a senior citizen?

Q: Yes.

A: You have driven into a swimming pool.

Q: I've had a few drinks. How can I tell if I should drive?

A: Take this simple test: Are you wearing your underpants on your head?

Q: Not *my* underpants, no.

A: Then you are good to go.

I DIDN'T WRITE THIS letter to make you nervous about driving here. I wrote it to make you terrified about driving here. Because I love you, and I will do everything I can to make sure you're really ready to drive. I'm going to keep coaching you until the day you finally get your license and are allowed to drive alone. Even when you finally drive away, solo at last, you're going to feel as if I'm still right there next to you, guiding you.

In fact, I *will* be right there next to you, walking at a leisurely pace alongside your car.

Your 1961 Valiant.

R

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Points to Ponder

NO ONE CAN give money to everyone who asks. But when you come upon one of your species who is struggling, you need to let him know that you see him. Look into his eyes, and let him look into yours.

ELIZABETH BERG,
novelist, in Real Simple

THERE IS A DIMENSION to life that is not fully knowable simply by our rational capacities. I love reason, I love science, but reason doesn't explain to me what it feels like to kiss my wife.

THOMAS TROEGER,
theologian, on wonderingsound.com

[THE 21ST CENTURY IS] just not what it was cracked up to be. I would have liked to see us control the weather as opposed to being able to make a phone call without having a cord.

LEWIS BLACK,
comedian, in the Eugene Weekly

GIVING YOUR BABY a name, it turns out, also includes anticipating how other children will cruelly twist it to hurt them. After a few rounds of brainstorming possible mean things, you begin to think you may have missed your calling.

MEAGHAN O'CONNELL,
writer, on nymag.com



They say you really appreciate a garden only once you reach a certain age ... There seems to be something miraculous about seeing the relentless optimism of new growth after the bleakness of winter, a kind of joy in the difference every year.

JOJO MOYES, novelist, in her book *Me Before You*

 Sign up for a daily Points to Ponder e-mail at rd.com/ptp.



My son and I will be watching a baseball game together, and a popular player hits a home run, and ... my son, without hesitation, will ... ask, "You think he's on steroids?" Heroes have been broken before his eyes so many times, and that's disheartening.

MATT LAUER, *cohost of Today*, in *Esquire*

THE RED CARPET is a strange zone in the Western world, one utterly untouched by feminism ... It is a place where there is a tacit agreement that both celebrities and the public are idiots and will be treated as such by entertainment journalists.

HADLEY FREEMAN,

op-ed columnist, in the *Guardian* (U.K.)

IF YOU WANT to live a good life these days, you know what you're supposed to do. Get into college but then drop out. Spend your days learning computer science and your nights coding. Start a technology company ... that's the new American dream.

FAREED ZAKARIA,

writer, in his book *In Defense of a Liberal Education*



ON THE PRESIDENCY

WE ELECT OUR PRESIDENTS with all this hope and all this expectation. The fact is, the job just isn't that powerful. The president is one actor among many. By design.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS,

TV correspondent and former presidential adviser, in *Parade*

ONE OF THE ODDITIES of America's cherished political system is that the job of chief executive ... requires no executive experience. Men who have done little more than ... manage the staff of a U.S. Senate office find themselves in charge of a vast bureaucracy and an all-powerful military.

EDWARD KOSNER,

former Newsweek editor, in the *Wall Street Journal*

OUR WOULD-BE PRESIDENTS ... are expected to spend the prelude to Election Day hurtling across time zones, doing a slew of interviews and oodles of speeches ... Is it any wonder that our rulers as a class, and we as a country, are bereft of big ideas?

FRANK BRUNI,

op-ed columnist, in the *New York Times*



Why I Stopped Whining

I was the queen of complaints—until I realized what I was missing

BY ROXANE GAY FROM *O* MAGAZINE

I HAVE LIVED in rural America for nine years, first in Michigan, where I was getting my PhD; then in central Illinois; and now in Indiana, where I am a professor. In a place where most people have lived the whole of their lives, I feel like

a stranger—someone on the outside looking in.

There are few things I enjoy more than complaining about my geographic isolation. I'm a vegetarian, so there's nowhere to go for a nice dinner that isn't 50 miles away. I'm black, so

there's nowhere to get my hair done that doesn't involve *another* 50-mile drive. I'm single, and the dating options are, at times, grim. And the closest major airport is two hours away.

I recite these gripes to my parents, my brothers, my friends. Sometimes it seems like complaints are the lingua franca in my circle. We all are dissatisfied with something. Back in Illinois, my friends complained about the train to Chicago and how it's never on time; my friends in bigger cities complain about the expensive rent and strange smells on the subway; my married friends complain about their partners; my single friends complain about the wretchedness of dating.

Complaining allows us to acknowledge the imperfect without having to take action—it lets us luxuriate in inertia. We all have grand ideas about what life would be like if only we had this, or did that, or lived there. Perhaps complaining helps bridge the vast yawn between these fantasy selves and reality.

And there's this: I really don't intend to change most of the things I complain about. Gripping is seductive on those days when happiness requires too much energy. But it also makes me lose sight of the fact that I

was born and bred in Nebraska and have lived most of my life in one of the plains states. When I go to the coasts, I am struck by how ultimately unappealing big-city living can be.

And while I may not love where I live, there are plenty of people who are proud to call this place home. At a party with colleagues, I was going on about everything I couldn't stand in our town when I noticed that they were silent and shifting uncomfortably. That humbling moment forced a shift in me.

Complaining may offer relief, but so does acceptance. There is no perfect place. There is no perfect life. There will always be something to moan about. By focusing on grievances, I risk missing out on precious, startling moments of appreciation.

Those times when, during a drive home from the airport, I stare at the prairie flatness, the breathtaking shades of green as buds of corn push up through freshly tilled soil; at the wooden barns, their paint peeling and faded; and at pieces of farm equipment, massive but with poetry in how they rumble across the land. When I get home, I stand on my balcony and look up into the night sky and see the stars. And I know that I have absolutely nothing to complain about. **R**



ROXANE GAY
is an English professor at Purdue University and the author of *Bad Feminist*, an essay collection, and *An Untamed State*, a novel.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

The one song that feel better is...

Spokane, WA

“Long Black Train”

by Josh Turner. It reaffirms my faith and commitment to God.

GERALD ARMSTRONG

American Fork, UT

“Uprising”

by Muse. It makes me feel empowered.

SARAH PRATT

“All Summer Long”

by Kid Rock. It reminds me of my Tennessee summers by the Nolichucky River and my Michigan-born husband.

BETH RUTHERFORD ADAMS

Newbury Park, CA

“What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong.

This is the song that I danced to with my son at his wedding.

KATHY HOLZER

“Passionate Kisses”

by Mary Chapin Carpenter. It is my personal anthem.

REBECCA DYANNE MINOR

always makes me

“America the Beautiful.”

It fills me with great gratitude every time I hear it.

MEL MAURER

Lee's Summit, MO

Du Quoin, IL

“I Just Called to Say I Love You” by Stevie Wonder.

According to my sixth-grade diary, that's what was on the radio when I got my first kiss.

NICHOLE AIRHART

Austin, TX

Youngsville, LA

“Summer Nights”

from the movie *Grease*. It made me completely forget about my impending chemotherapy. I was 22. I'm still grateful for those minutes of relief.

JOHN DEMEO

Cumberland, RI

Westlake, OH

“Time After Time”

by Cyndi Lauper.

My sister sang it to me when I was a baby, and I sang it to my daughter when she was a baby.

AMBER CARROTHERS

“Single Ladies” by Beyoncé.

Get up and dance!

DEBBIE ROSENKRANZ

Miami, FL

 Go to [facebook.com/readersdigest](https://www.facebook.com/readersdigest) for the chance to finish the next sentence.

FACES OF AMERICA

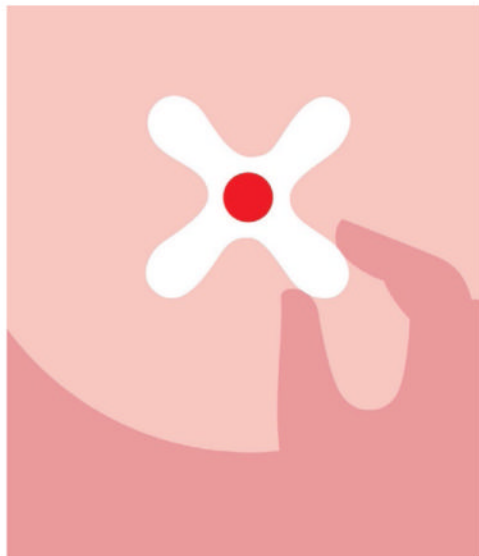
BY GLENN GLASSER



Melissa Vargas

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

"I'm a costume designer. For Halloween last year, my friends and I dressed up as sushi. I was a tuna roll. We had wasabi and ginger hats and little grass purses (to represent the grass they put in the box). We had backpacks made out of packing peanuts as our 'rice' and seaweed belts."



Is a ban on pumping
sexual discrimination?

The Case Of the Mother's Milk

BY VICKI GLEBOCKI

ON DECEMBER 1, 2008, Donnicia Venters began a leave of absence from her job to have a baby. For three years, she'd been working as a collector at Houston Funding, a debt collection firm, in Houston, Texas. With only about 25 employees, Houston Funding wasn't large enough to be governed by the Family and Medical Leave Act, and it had no official "maternity leave" policy. Still, Venters's manager Robert Fleming assured her, "Your spot will be here when you get back," though a return date wasn't specified.

The baby was born on December 11, and complications from Venters's C-section kept her home for several more weeks than expected. She told

vice president Harry Cagle that she'd return as soon as her doctor released her. During this time, she called Fleming at least once a week. In one conversation, she mentioned she was nursing the baby and asked if she could use a breast pump at work when she returned. When Fleming asked Cagle about it, the partner's response was strong: "No. Maybe she needs to stay at home longer." Venters testified that she wasn't aware of his remark.

She called Cagle on February 17, 2009, to tell him she was ready to come back. She also let him know that she was still nursing and wondered if she could use a back room at the office to pump milk. After ➤➤

what Venters described as “a long pause,” she alleges Cagle told her, “Your spot has been filled.” Three days later, Houston Funding mailed a termination letter to Venters dated February 16, stating that she’d been fired due to “job abandonment.”

On June 29, 2011, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) filed a sex discrimination lawsuit on Venters’s behalf in district court for the Southern District of Texas. The EEOC argued that the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA)—the 1978 amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, and gender—makes it clear that discrimination on

the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions was discrimination related to one’s sex.

“I feel that when I told him about the breast pump that his attitude changed,” Venters testified in court. “[I]nstead of letting me know, he told me I was fired.”

On November 11, Houston Funding’s attorneys filed a motion for summary judgment, arguing “that the EEOC’s case failed as a matter of law because breast pump discrimination is not prohibited by Title VII.”

Was it sex discrimination when Houston Funding fired Donnicia Venters after she asked to pump breast milk at work? You be the judge.



THE VERDICT

The district court dismissed the lawsuit on February 2, 2012, ruling that the PDA didn’t apply. Since “lactation is not pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition,” the court stated, “firing someone because of lactation or breast pumping is not sex discrimination.”

EEOC spokesperson Justine Lisser noted that the ruling “flew in the face of not just the law but common sense.” That spring, the EEOC appealed to the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which unanimously agreed that Venters had been discriminated against and overturned the lower court’s ruling. In May 2014, Venters received a \$15,000 settlement from Houston Funding. “The Fifth Circuit opinion didn’t set a major precedent,” says Lisser, “but recognized the obvious.”



Agree? Disagree? Sound off at rd.com/judge.

Your True Stories

IN 100 WORDS

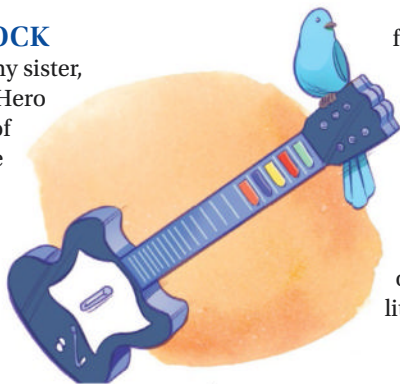
MOTHER OF ROCK

For my brother, my sister, and me, Guitar Hero was a competition of who could score the most points on the hardest level. Mom, on the other hand, would play the ten-minute “Freebird” on the easiest level while we kids prepared for our next showdown. When Mom restarted the song after missing a note, we all shouted our disapproval. “Rock stars do what they want,” she said, and we laughed because we agreed: Mom was a rock star. That’s why, later, her funeral felt more like the last stop on a farewell tour, with “Freebird” as the perfect send-off.

PAUL ANDERSON, *Mt. Pleasant, Michigan*

THE LITTLE THINGS

When I was in first grade, my father lovingly brought home a colorful schoolbag for me. I shouldered the new empty bag like a prized possession for an hour; then I heard a barely audible clunk from within it. I sifted through every pocket until I found a little clown man and a red



fish. Even though today my tiny red fish can’t swim in water anymore and the clown can’t move in funny circles anymore, I can still feel the ultimate joy of those unexpected little toys. **ANUM WASIM,**
Karachi, Pakistan

A CUT ABOVE THE REST

The Vietcong lobbed mortars into our base camp. My friend and I were asleep when a shell hit close by. He had a tattoo on his left arm, a bulldog with the letters U.S.M.C. underneath. We were both wounded and evacuated, and I did not see him again until months later when we encountered each other at Great Lakes Naval Hospital. I noticed his Marine Corps tattoo was completely gone. He said the mortar shell had sliced it off with the precision of a surgeon’s scalpel. There you have it: free tattoo removal courtesy of the Vietcong.

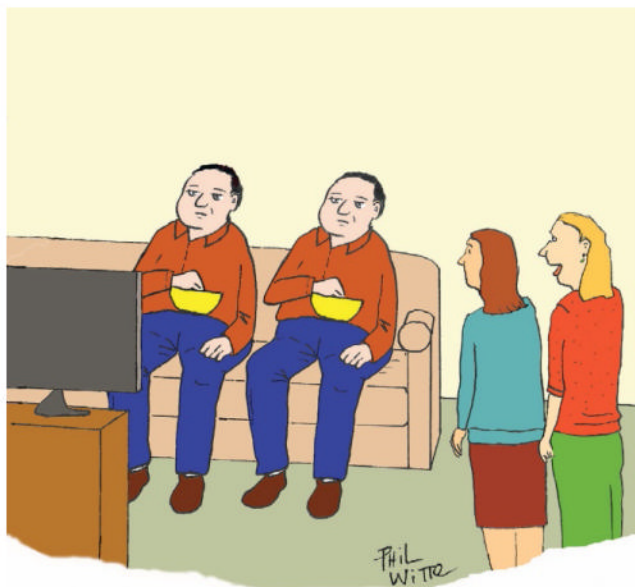
KEN MCBRIDE, *Chesterfield, Missouri*

To read more 100-word stories and to submit your own, go to rd.com/stories. If your story is selected for publication in the magazine, we’ll pay you \$100.



Life

IN THESE UNITED STATES



"Guess which one I made with a 3-D printer."

MY SISTER DIDN'T DO as well on her driver's-ed test as she'd hoped. It might have had something to do with how she completed this sentence: "When the _____ is dead, the car won't start."

She wrote: "Driver."

NATHAN HELLMAN, Brooklyn, New York

AS I WAITED for my luggage at the airport, a man lifted my

suitcase off the baggage carousel.

"Excuse me," I shouted. "That's my suitcase."

The man shot back defensively, "Well, somebody took mine!"

C. S., via Internet

MY 11-YEAR-OLD grandson spent a beautiful Saturday playing video games. His older sister tried coaxing him outside by warning, "Someday,

you're going to be 30 years old, single, and living in Mom's basement playing video games all day!"

His reply: "I can only dream."

SYLVIA CARDENAS,
Hacienda Heights, California

THERE'S NOTHING SIMPLER than avoiding people you don't like. Avoiding one's friends, that's the real test.

Source: The Dowager Countess (Maggie Smith),
on *Downton Abbey*

AFTER AN IMPROMPTU song, our pastor asked the church pianist, "What key did I sing that in?"

The pianist replied, "Most of them."

JUDY SCHEFFEL, *Alpharetta, Georgia*

A HOTEL MINIBAR allows you to see into the future and find out what a can of Pepsi will cost in 2020.

Comedian **RICH HALL**

DURING A VISIT with my grandmother, my husband noticed a birthday card from a local funeral parlor.

"That was nice of them," he said.

She was unimpressed. "They only want me for my body," she grumbled.

CARMEN SCHMEISER, *Normal, Illinois*

AND ONE FROM ABROAD:

During a Pilates class, our thin teacher apologized to one of her larger students for blocking her view of herself in the mirror.

"Don't worry," the woman said. "I can see myself on either side of you."

AMANDA BARTON, *Derby, England*



HERE'S TO YOU, MOM!

Stories that show why mothers deserve their own day.

■ After catching her five-year-old son Lucas trying to pull a fast one, his mother demanded, "Do you think I have *idiot* written on my forehead?"

Lucas answered, "I don't know. I can't read."

■ Watching his mother apply nail polish, Lucas asked, "Why are you doing that?"

"It's just something ladies do in order to look nice," she said.

He considered this a minute before asking, "So, are you a kind of lady?"

■ As he got his diaper changed, Daniel looked down and said, "I have a wee-wee. Daddy has a wee-wee."

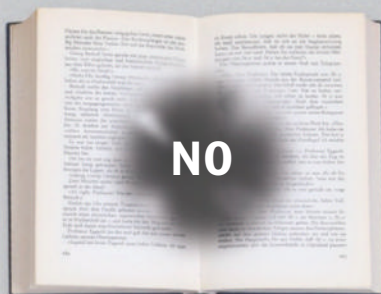
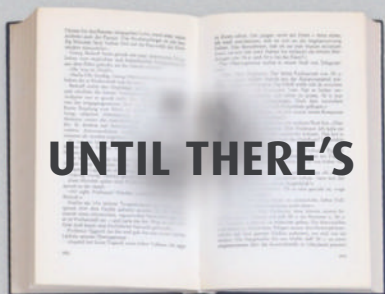
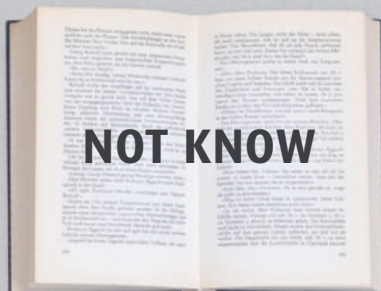
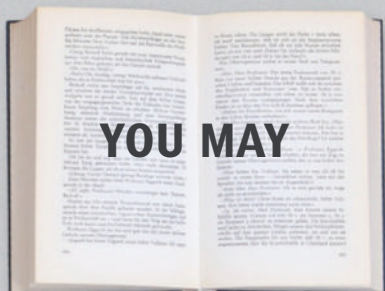
"That's right," said his mother. "That's because you're both boys. Do you know what mommies have?"

Daniel did: "Earrings."

From I Am So Full of Happy Today
by Martin Nedergaard Anderson and Moira Tuffy
(Borgen Publishers)

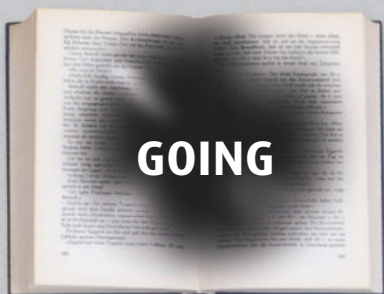
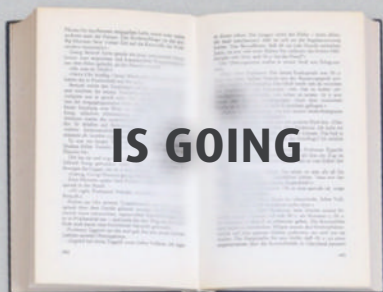
Make Mom proud and get your anecdote published in *Reader's Digest*. It could be worth \$100. See page 7 for details.

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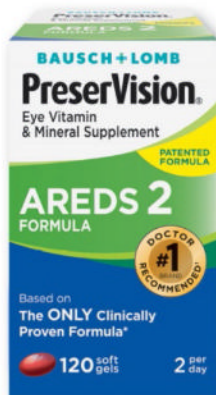


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BAUSCH+LOMB

Paul McCartney

The Beatles bass man sounds off

Life is quite mysterious and quite miraculous. Every time I come to write a song, there's this magic little thing where I go, "Ooh, ooh, it's happening again." I just sit down at the piano and go, "Oh my God, I don't know this one," and suddenly there's a song.

Source: *Reader's Digest*

Over the years, people have said, "Aw, he sings love songs." ... Well, I know what they mean, but people have been doing love songs forever. I like 'em, other people like 'em, and there's a lot of people I love.

Source: *Billboard*

In the '60s, [my ambition] was to get a car ... And I got one. We used to always say it when we were kids: Get a guitar, a car, and a house. That was the height of our ambition ... It wasn't to rule the world.

Source: *Sunday Telegraph (U.K.)*

We were there every night to put [our children] to bed, there in the mornings to wake them up. So even though we were some famous

couple, to them we're just Mom and Dad. I think that's what's important ... and it worked.

Source: *USA Weekend*

There's an urge in us to stop the terrible fleetingness of time. Music. Paintings. It's the same with Linda's photos ... The night we blew the candles out on a birthday with the kids. Capture it, please.

Source: *New Statesman*

I'd come back after a jog, and I'd thought of a couple of lines of poetry, and I'd tell them to Linda ... She often said, "What a mind." ... Your little heart just goes boom, boom.

Source: *Hamilton Spectator*

The last time I [saw George Harrison], he was very sick, and I held his hand for four hours. As I was doing it, I was thinking, I've never held his hand before, ever. This is not what two Liverpool fellas do ... He just stroked my hand with his thumb, and I thought, Ah, this is OK; this is life. It's tough, but it's lovely.

Source: *the Daily Mirror (U.K.)*

“

We played ... “She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah,” and [my father] said, “Oh, that’s very good, son. But there’s just one thing. Couldn’t you sing, ‘She loves you, yes, yes, yes’?”

Source: NPR’s *Fresh Air*

I’ve never met any people more soulful, more intelligent, more kind, more filled with common sense than the people I came from in Liverpool ... They’re not important or famous. But they are smart ... people who can just cut through problems like a hot knife through butter.

Source: *Playboy*

I should be able to look at my accolades and go, “Come on, Paul. That’s enough.” But there’s still this little voice ... that goes, “No, no, no. You could do better. This person over here is excelling. Try harder!”

Source: NPR’s *All Things Considered*

Life is an energy field, a bunch of molecules. And these particular molecules formed to make these four guys, [the Beatles] ... I have to think

that was something metaphysical. Something alchemic. Something that must be thought of as magic.

Source: *Rolling Stone*

I am the eternal optimist. No matter how rough it gets, there’s always light somewhere. The rest of the sky may be cloudy, but that little bit of blue draws me on. **R**

Source: *Sunday Times* (U.K.)

Sweet raisins and tart cranberries.

Together at last.

I love redheads



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ART *of* LIVING



Even the most honest among us lie, cheat,
or push boundaries now and then ...

Why We Bend The Rules

BY JENA PINCOTT

FROM PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

IN MY EARLY 30s, I used an expired grad-student ID to buy discounted movie tickets. (I'd peeled off the date sticker.) I'd tell myself, I'm buying a ticket I wouldn't have otherwise bought. One must be resourceful in an overpriced city, right?

If you also break rules sometimes, you understand this paradox. We think of ourselves as honest citizens despite daily acts (one to two on average) of cheating, lying, or otherwise innocuous rule breaking. We stand in the express line with too many groceries, play hooky from work, board planes before our seat is called, or lie to give our kids an advantage.

Researchers who study everyday transgressions believe that character isn't the real driver; situational forces are. We might break the rules under some conditions and in some mind-sets, but not in others.

The Creativity Defense

Years ago, Francesca Gino, a professor at Harvard, and Dan Ariely, a behavioral economist at Duke, wondered if people with higher IQs were more likely to cheat. The duo found that smarts didn't correlate with dishonesty, but creativity did. When Gino and Ariely posed ethical dilemmas to employees in an advertising firm, the copywriters and designers were more likely to break the rules than the accountants. The more creative you are, the easier it is to retell the story of what happened

when you behaved dishonestly.

Test yourself. Why did you pilfer office supplies? You might say that you worked through lunch or that businesses get the stuff cheaply. This is how creative types "reframe" an event. And a creative mind-set, Gino found, is easy to induce in almost anyone—just by using subtle cues. When players in a gambling game were primed to think more flexibly (by being exposed to words like *original*, *novel*, and *imaginative* in a text they read), they cheated more often than those not given the prompts did.

"Working for an organization that stresses being innovative and original can increase our tendency to cheat," Gino says.

"Should we encourage less creativity in banking?" Ariely wonders.

The Status Defense

Picture two accountants alerted to suspicious entries in the books. The first takes the violation seriously. The second pooh-poohs it. Who has more clout? When Dutch psychologist Gerben van Kleef asked study participants that question, most chose the second accountant. Powerful people break the rules—ergo, breaking rules makes one seem more powerful.

"In its modest form, rule breaking is actually healthy," says Zhen Zhang of Arizona State University. He found that relatively minor Ferris Bueller-style violations during adolescence—



damaging property, playing hooky—predicted an esteemed occupation: entrepreneur.

When young men, in particular, take risks that pan out, testosterone levels surge. The hormone may underlie the “winner effect,” say researchers John Coates and Joe Herbert of the University of Cambridge, who tracked the hormonal activity of stock option traders (again, all male) over their good and bad days in the market. The more wins, the higher the hormones, the greater the confidence boost, the bigger the risks, and so on.

But at a certain point, risk taking can become irrational, reckless, or ruthless. This can cause “ethical numbing.” Consider Steve Jobs: As Apple grew, so did lawsuits against it, like those over patents.

Being wealthy takes a moral toll on both genders. Studies have found that the \$150,000-plus-per-annum set was four times as likely to cheat as those making less than \$15,000 a year when playing a game to win \$50. The rich didn’t stop for pedestrians at a crosswalk nearly as often as less-wealthy

drivers. This held true even when people were role-playing—that is, they weren’t rich in real life.

That’s because environment—not any intrinsic personality trait—abets rule breaking, argues Andy Yap, a behavioral scientist. Yap and his colleagues asked volunteers to sit in an SUV-size driver’s seat versus a cramped one or an executive-size office space versus a cubicle and then tested their responses to various moral scenarios. In roomier settings, people reported feeling more powerful and were likelier to steal money, cheat on a test, and commit traffic violations in a driving simulation.

The Bonding Defense

We aren’t born with an enlightened, universal sense of fairness for all, Harvard University psychologist Joshua Greene argues in his book *Moral Tribes*. We evolved as tribal animals who followed the rules within small groups (Us) but not with the rest of the world (Them).

We may be born with a crude sense of right and wrong, but our culture refines it. If your tribe downloads pirated music, sells dubious stocks, or accepts bribes, you're likely to go with the flow or cover up for peers.

The Level-Playing-Field Defense

Let's say you witnessed someone tear through a red light. Or a colleague received a promotion after boozing with the boss, while you toiled and got nothing. Chances are, you'll experience a knee-jerk reaction: to get even or at least to level the field.

To test the fairness instinct, Harvard researcher Leslie John, along with two colleagues, told volunteers that others in the room were making more money than they were for getting questions right on a trivia test. Guess what happened? That group, which perceived itself as disadvantaged, cheated more than those who believed that everyone received an equal payment.

The Solution: Self-Awareness

The real threat is the slippery slope—that minor transgressions can snowball into cataclysmic ones. Imagine Bernie Madoff or Lance Armstrong thinking, Just this once. OK, once more. And eventually, they just don't think about it. Rule breaking worsens over time. Kids who cheat on high school exams are three times as

likely in adulthood to lie to a customer or inflate an insurance claim compared with non-cheaters, according to the Josephson Institute.

Behavioral psychology offers a few antidotes. Keep yourself fed and well-rested—we're likelier to lapse when hungry or tired. Reflect on how your actions look through others' eyes. In a classic British experiment, a drawing of eyeballs mounted over a collection box at a corporate coffee bar helped enforced the honor system.

When people sign an ethics pledge at the beginning rather than the end of tax forms or job applications—before there's an opportunity to cheat—they are significantly less likely to be dishonest. The same goes when asked to recall the Ten Commandments before a test, which Ariely found works even among the nonreligious.

Most of us need to see ourselves in a positive light. In a Stanford study, when researchers used the verb *cheat*—please don't cheat—participants still cheated freely because they felt distanced from the act. When the noun *cheater* was used—don't be a cheater—not a single person did.

The novelist Wallace Stegner summed it up in his novel *All the Little Live Things*: "It is the beginning of wisdom when you recognize that the best you can do is choose which rules you want to live by." To which he added: "It's persistent and aggravated imbecility to pretend you can live without any." **R**

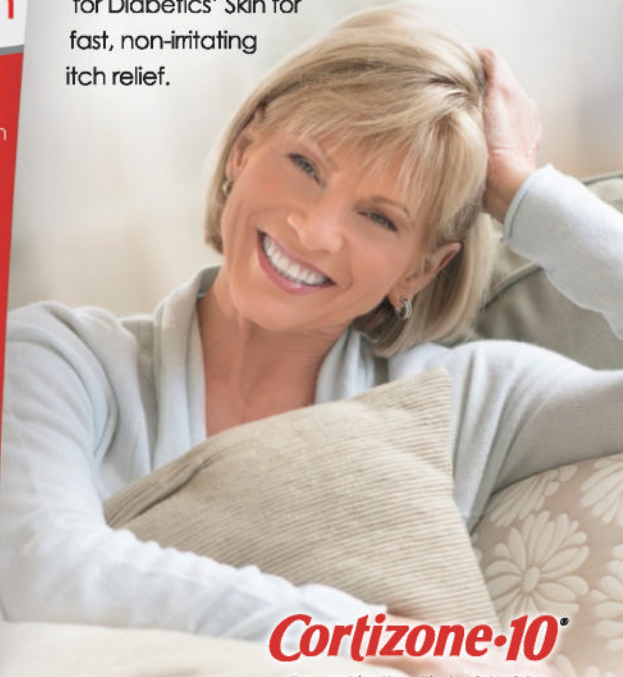
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Watch The World Wake Up

BY PETER JON LINDBERG
FROM *TRAVEL AND LEISURE*

❧ I AM NOT a morning person. I am a lover of evenings and midnights, firmly oriented to the post meridiem. (It took me some time to realize there was a 6 “a.m.”)

On the road, however, I make a point of waking early. Just as safari guides have you up at dawn to catch the day's prime activity, the world rewards those who rise before the sun.

Jet lag often makes this imperative, as do crazy-early flight arrivals. I remember landing at Heathrow with my parents on a Sunday morning at age 13, only to learn our B and B wouldn't take us till noon; we wandered London's vacant streets for hours, searching in vain for an open restaurant.

But there are good reasons to hit the town before sunrise. Mornings are when a place is most specifically itself—before it's properly dressed



or put together, unaware that anyone's watching when it steps out for the paper in a bathrobe. Like waking in a stranger's bed, there's a disarming intimacy to seeing a place in the pale light of dawn.

Things are different just an hour or two later. Under the day's full glare, a foreign place can appear too foreign, too harsh, too much. But in morning's gauzy half-light, hard edges soften, and the most overwhelming metropolis achieves a certain gentleness, before the heat and the clamor roll in.

Some of my favorite travel memories are from 4 or 5 a.m.'s around the world, badly immortalized in hundreds of grainy, inchoate

photographs. (It's almost impossible to capture that particular primordial light with a camera; in this case, you really do need to be there.)

I remember, for instance, a pre-dawn walk on the beach in Trancoso, Brazil: earth and sky and surf drained of color, hermit crabs scarcely bothering to move at my approach. The previous night's phosphorescence sparkled faintly on the sand. The world felt like a carnival ride that had yet to be turned on. And I remember returning from a late night out in Paris, crossing the Pont Neuf as the sky went purple to pink. Off the Rue de Seine, I passed the open door of a still-closed boulangerie, out of which came an intoxicating smell of butter and yeast. Someone had left a rack of warm baguettes in the doorway to cool in the crisp morning air. There was no one else in sight. I stood there for a few seconds before realizing what had to be done. It was the best baguette I'd ever tasted.

But mostly I remember mornings in Asia, where dawn's transformational power feels most profound. It helps that the time zones are a half-day off from home, such that nocturnals like me are wide-awake at daybreak—right in sync with the city itself. In Asia, morning life feels like nightlife. It's not just street sweepers and saffron-robed monks; there's a whole parallel morning economy at work.

Follow my lead, roust yourself from your Tokyo hotel bed at 4 a.m.,

and you'll see what frenzied activity goes down before the sun is up. Your taxi will glide down empty expressways as if you're in rural Nebraska, not a city of 13 million. On the sidewalks of Ginza, stray revelers are staggering home from their revelries. One girl is dressed as Snow White. You'll start to wonder if you're actually awake.

Finally, you'll pull up at the Tsukiji fish market, amid a madcap ballet of forklifts. They careen at you full tilt, then swerve at the last possible moment. Everyone is wide-awake, smoking, and wearing rubber boots—except you. You are wearing an ill-advised pair of loafers, which in a few hours will be summarily tossed in your hotel trash bin, the reek of fish guts so pervasive that no amount of free shoe shining could possibly remove it.

You make your way inside to the famous tuna auction. From a corner, you watch the action unfold, and in your transpacific delirium, you're convinced you understand what's going on. Men with poles are poking a lifeless 500-pound tuna while smoking and shouting at one another. This could get ugly quick. You escape out a side door. Moments later you're at Sushi Dai, and at 6:15 a.m. on a Tuesday, you're sipping ice-cold Sapporo and gorging on shrimp as if it were Friday night.

Back at your hotel, the newspaper's not even on the doorknob yet. **R**



Freeze Better & Defrost Faster

BY KELSEY KLOSS

Freeze It

■ CHILL BERRIES

Prevent a mushy mess by freezing berries on a baking sheet in a single layer first. The exposure to the cold freezes them quickly. This prevents the formation of large ice crystals, which destroys cell walls and makes berries lose their structure and become soft when they thaw. Once frozen, transfer to a plastic freezer bag.

■ SAVE MILK

Accidentally bought a gallon of milk before leaving town? Freeze it at 0°F for up to three months. Milk expands when frozen, so pour out a bit first if the container is full. Thaw in the refrigerator for two to three days.

■ PRESERVE BACON GREASE

After Sunday morning brunch, make a delicious topping while reducing waste. Pour leftover bacon fat from



the pan into an ice cube tray and freeze. Throughout the week, warm up the cubes and drizzle on salad or trickle over popcorn—or use to fry potatoes.

■ PUREE AVOCADOS

Freezing avocados changes their consistency (making them squishy

STYLIST: SARAH CAVE FOR E.H. MANAGEMENT

and not-so-preferable for sandwiches), but they'll still be tasty in guacamole. Puree with a food processor and add one teaspoon of lime or lemon juice (these acidic agents prevent browning) per avocado. Store in an airtight container. The puree will last for five months.

■ PEEL TOMATOES

Preserve summer produce for quick sauces and soups all year. Freeze ripe whole tomatoes in a single layer on a tray with parchment paper. Once frozen, transfer to a freezer bag, where they'll keep for up to eight months. To thaw, run under warm water, and the skin will slip right off.

Thaw It

■ SOFTEN BUTTER

To make cold butter spreadable (but not a puddle!), put the amount you plan to use on a plate. Fill a glass with hot water until it is warm on the outside, then pour out the water, dry quickly, and place the glass over the butter. After about a minute, the butter will be soft and ready.

■ PORTION YOUR BEEF

Plan ahead to quickly defrost ground beef for a dinner for one: Before freezing, press it thin in a plastic bag with a rolling pin (increasing surface area will speed up thawing later). Use a chopstick to crisscross and separate the meat into portioned squares. When ready to cook, break

off as many pieces as you'd like; defrosting will be a quick breeze.

■ BATHE BERRIES

Typically, it's best to thaw frozen berries in the refrigerator overnight. However, if you're craving blueberries for breakfast and didn't prepare in advance, there is a quicker method. Instead of microwaving, which can make frozen berries soggy, pour them into a bowl and cover with cold water. This will thaw one cup of blueberries in about five minutes.

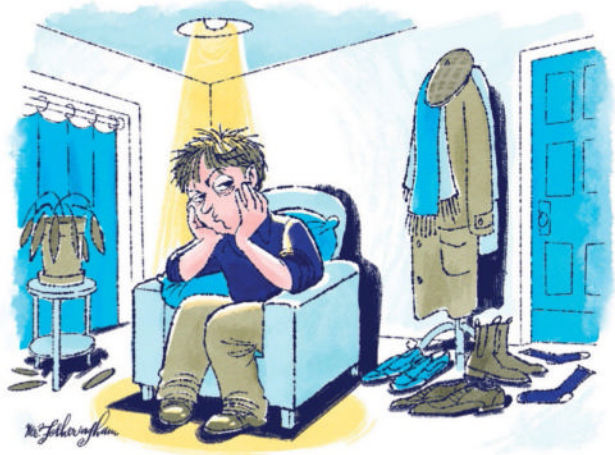
■ SCOOP ICE CREAM

Ice cream hard as a brick? Heat a sharp knife under warm water, then use it to make one-inch-deep cuts in a grid formation, spacing the lines about an inch apart. This increases your sweet treat's exposed surface area, speeding up the thawing process (similar to the beef trick). Run a scooper under warm water, and easily serve up each section.

■ DEFROST MEAT

Thank high school science for this neat trick: Remember, metal conducts heat. Place meat in a plastic bag, then put it on top of an upside-down aluminum pot. Fill another pot with room-temperature water, and set it on the meat. In five to ten minutes, your meat will be defrosted. **R**

Sources: cookinglight.com, foodnetwork.com, huffingtonpost.com, avocadocentral.com, *Vegetarian Times*, food.unl.edu, clemons.edu, healthyeating.org, America's Test Kitchen, womenshealthmag.com, favoritedefreezerfoods.com, lifehacker.com, thekitchn.com



7 Sneaky Ways Your House Is Making You Cranky

BY LAUREN PIRO FROM GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

1 THERE'S NOT A POTTED PLANT IN SIGHT (OR IT'S DEAD). Bright green leaves breathe life (literally) into your home—houseplants can purify the air indoors, which can be five times more polluted than outdoor air, reports the Environmental Protection Agency. Plus, studies have shown that plopping one in a bare spot can reduce stress.

2 YOUR ONLY LIGHT SOURCES ARE IN THE CEILING. If you rely on recessed lights (especially in your kitchen), you might not realize you're still living in the dark. Recessed lights don't allow the full

amount of brightness to shine from the bulb, so vertical surfaces don't get sufficiently lit. That leaves your space dark and gloomy. But task lights (like table lamps or under-the-cabinet lighting) help you to actually see what you're doing and create a brighter, happier space.

3 EVERY ACCESSORY YOU OWN IS A SOLID COLOR. When you choose pillows, throws, and wallpaper for your space, don't be too matchy-matchy. Mix in different patterns and colors for texture and personality. With only solids in the same tone, your design will appear flat, boring, and not very energizing. ➔

StainGuide



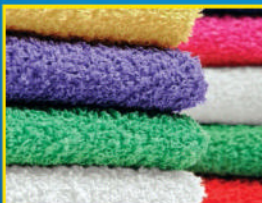
OxiClean™ Versatile tackles over **101 different types of stains**, is **color safe** and **chlorine free**.



Dirty Sports Uniforms

Pre-Soak Tough, Dried-In Stains!

Dissolve **OxiClean™ Versatile Stain Remover** powder with warm water and soak item for 1-6 hours for superior stain removal! Soak for 6 hours for best results.



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Add a Scoop to Every Load!

Add **OxiClean™ Versatile Stain Remover** to every load of laundry to boost your detergent's cleaning power!

- Helps to Prevent Colors from Fading
- Whites Get Whiter & Colors Stay Brighter
- Better Stain Removal



Dirty Outdoor Furniture

Use All Around Your Home!

Create a solution of **OxiClean™ Versatile Stain Remover** and warm water. Apply solution directly to stain, rinse with clean water & blot until dry!

Refer to product label for specific directions.
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HOME

4 YOUR ENTRYWAY IS DESIGNED TO BE A “DROP-EVERYTHING-HERE” ZONE.

A makeshift mudroom with hooks and bins might sound smart, but feng shui principles hold a clear entryway in high regard. You should be able to open the door all the way without hitting anything (and, ideally, without cringing at piles of clutter).

5 YOU PAINTED YOUR DINING ROOM A COOL BLUE. Certain blue hues can feel chilly instead of inviting. Research has found that the color can actually suppress appetite. That might sound great if you're looking to drop a few pounds (some dietitians even suggest eating off a blue plate), but it's not the best for family dinners.

6 YOUR CURTAINS ARE HUNG TOO LOW. Hang drapes from the ceiling, not from the top of your window frame. This way, your room will feel lofty instead of squat, and the curtain rod won't block any smile-inducing natural light.

7 THE FOCAL POINT OF YOUR BEDROOM IS THE TV. Zoning out in front of the fluorescent screen before bed might hamper your ability to sleep. Plus, one study found that couples with a television in their room have half as much lovin' time as couples who don't. Now, that doesn't sound very fun. **R**

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Never Compromise... your Nails and Hands

Introducing 14 *New* custom-crafted therapies
to take your nails and hands from natural disaster to *natural beauty*.



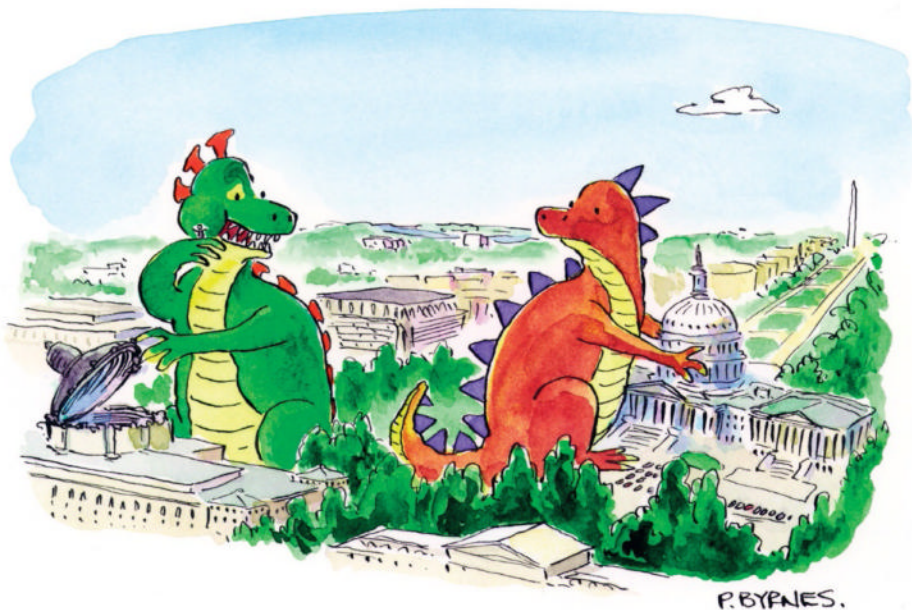
Nutra Nail® beauty uncompromised. Visit nutranailwellness.com

Available at



ALL IN

A Day's Work



"You can't eat that. It has nuts in it."

WE WERE MAKING leaflets for a local church, and the client wanted a logo designed with Earth being shielded by the hand of God. I sent the client a proof. Shortly thereafter, I got a call.

Client: The hand looks too human. Please use a hand that looks more like God's.

Source: clientsfromhell.net

MY FAVORITE GAME is "Professional Dog Walker or Crazy Person?"

🐦 @KENJENNINGS

"NOW HIRING," read the classified ad. "Cemetery superintendent. The ideal candidate must be able to supervise in a fast-paced environment."

A. S., via Internet

AN APPLICANT for an open teaching job submitted a résumé. Under the heading Qualities and Skills, she listed, “Impeachable character and integrity.”

M. O., via Internet

IT'S THE FIRST of the month; here are excuses tenants gave their landlords for not paying the rent.

- “I have to make payments on my BMW and iPhones.”
- “You are too wrapped up in the whole concept of ‘money.’”
- “So ... you’re talking to me only because the rent’s not paid? Is that all I am to you? A tenant?”

Source: the Landlord Protection Agency (thelpa.com)

THE BEST EVER legal advice spotted on a billboard came from an ad for the law office of Larry L. Archie: “Just because you did it doesn’t mean you’re guilty.”

Source: funnyordie.com

MY GRANDDAUGHTER was graduating from college, so I asked about any plans she had for the future. She hadn’t any, but she did know this much: “I certainly don’t want to sit in one of those cubicles and think all day.”

B. O., via Internet

ANY TIME A PERSON with a journalism degree writes a story about a celebrity getting bangs, Walter Cronkite punches an angel.

🐦@JENNYJOHNSONHIS

A CLIENT CALLED my help desk saying she couldn’t send an e-mail. When I was done troubleshooting the problem, she interrupted me to ask, “Wait a minute, do I type @ in lower- or uppercase?”

SWATI KHATRI, New Delhi, India



OOH, OOH, I KNOW, I KNOW!

These smart-alecky student answers show why teachers need their summer vacations.

Q: What’s the name of a six-sided polygon?

A: Sixagon.

Q: What part of the body is affected by glandular fever?

A: The glandular.

Q: In *The Tempest*, why does Ariel sing in Gonzalo’s ear?

A: She’s a mermaid and wants to be human.

Q: In comparison with large hydrocarbons, how would you describe small hydrocarbons?

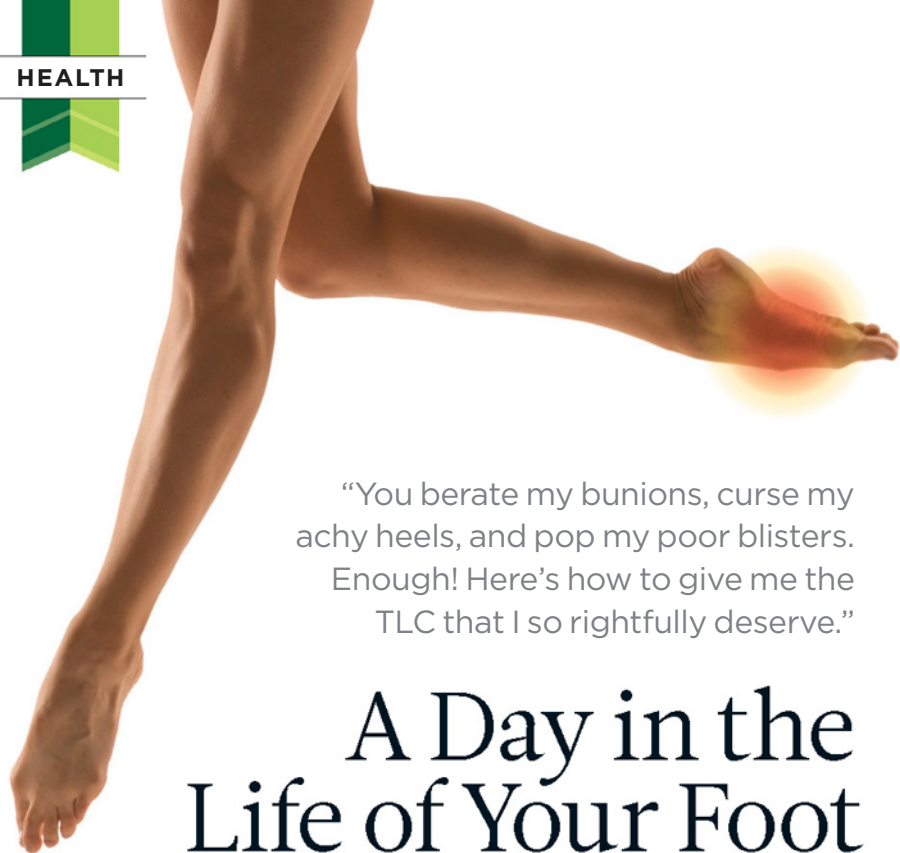
A: They’re smaller.

Q: Who were the Bolsheviks?

A: A Russian ballet company.

From *F in Exams: Pop Quiz*,
by Richard Benson (Chronicle Books)

Anything funny happen to you at work lately? It could be worth \$100. See page 7 for details or go to rd.com/submit.



“You berate my bunions, curse my achy heels, and pop my poor blisters. Enough! Here’s how to give me the TLC that I so rightfully deserve.”

A Day in the Life of Your Foot

BY TERESA DUMAIN

❧ IGNORE THE ALARM clock. I’m so cozy snuggled between your hubby’s feet. They’re always warmer than I am. (A woman’s body draws more heat toward the core, the theory goes, which gives me and my friend on the left the shaft.) Your schedule is packed, and you’re going to be leaning on me for most of it. So please, just a few more minutes in bed.

Thanks for the Walk

Kudos for not skipping your morning workout, even though you’re running late (not my fault—the other extremity hit snooze). I appreciate that you’re serious about slimming down. Weighing as little as one pound more than your ideal weight can increase pressure in your hips, knees, and ankles by as much as eight pounds,

which puts even more strain on me.

See, I wish you would appreciate that I have to orchestrate a complex network of 26 bones, nearly three dozen joints, and more than 100 muscles, tendons, and ligaments for every single step you take. It's a high-pressure job that, frankly, you sometimes make harder without meaning to.

Thirty seconds. That's all it would have taken for you to grab the new walking shoes you just bought. But in your rush, you opted for the old, ratty sneakers by the back door. I know you feel bad about tossing them, but believe me, I feel much worse wearing them. The sole is worn so thin that it stresses my bones and joints when you walk and leaves me vulnerable to getting hurt. Plus, I need the extra foam cushioning under my fat pad. That spot—the one you call the ball of your foot—is packed with mini fat-filled chambers that serve as shock absorbers. But it's starting to thin as you get older. And those extra 20 pounds you're trying to lose has sped up the process. After 50 years and walking about 75,000 miles (that's like three times around Earth), I think I've earned the right to additional support.

Ahh. At least you remembered to rub me with antiperspirant first. Since I sweat a lot, a swipe on my sole (where all my 125,000 sweat glands reside) helps keep moisture and odor to a minimum.

Give Me Some Space, Please!

Though you and I didn't get off on the best, um, foot this morning, I'm loving the broccoli and low-fat cheese omelet you had for breakfast. The extra calcium in the dairy and veggie is important—your feet are home to a quarter of all the bones in your body. Plus, broccoli has anti-inflammatory properties. If eating it can help ease the burning sensation flaring up in me, go ahead and have it for lunch and dinner too.

The burning started a few months back. It's a sign of Morton's neuroma, in which the nerve between the bones of my third and fourth toes gets compressed, inflamed, and then enlarged. Your toes sometimes tingle and go numb when you walk, and the pain radiates through the balls of the feet. Part of the problem is that I was born without much of an arch, which can leave my toe joints a little less secure and irritate the nerve. Then you spent years wearing those high, pointy shoes to the office almost every day, squeezing my toe bones and nerves until they couldn't take it anymore.

Since you wisely packed up the pumps a few years back (thank you, thank you, thank you), the inflammation is slowly dissipating. But it may take a little trial and error before we find the right shoes to stop it from getting worse. Like today: The heel is low, and the shoe is well cushioned,

but the toe box is still too narrow, pinching the nerve and making it burn. Yesterday's flats were plenty roomy, but the sole was too thin to offer any shock absorption. You can fit those flats with a pad from the drugstore—the extra cushioning takes pressure off the nerve to ease the neuroma pain.

If this shoe experimenting fails, the next step is to talk to my favorite person—your podiatrist—about treatments such as injecting me with a nerve block. The combo of a numbing medication and a steroid can sometimes help decrease inflammation.

Your afternoon meeting is long, which annoys you—but not me! After the pressure I've experienced all day, taking a load off feels good.

Do you mind uncrossing your legs though? It sometimes pinches the peroneal nerve along the knee, which can leave me temporarily numb. That “pins and needles” feeling you hate is the nerve regaining function. And do you have to slap me against the ground to help “wake me up” faster? Ouch.

No. More. Flip-Flops.

Your computer is shut down for the weekend, your heels are kicked off,

and your favorite flip-flops are slipped on as we head out to pick up the last few things for your husband's birthday party tomorrow. You know I'll hoof it to get you to all the stores before they close. Your husband's been a little down since he was diagnosed with diabetes, and I want to help you lift his spirits.



***If only you'd fit
your flats with
a drugstore pad.
The cushioning
takes pressure
off my nerves.***

But these cheap plastic flip-flops are not cut out for an errand marathon. My toes have to over-grip to keep the shoe from flying off, which puts a lot of unnecessary stress on me. That pain you feel from ankle to inner arch? It's my posterior tibial tendon cursing you. That ten-

don is one of my major supporting structures. Because I'm flat, it's had to work extra hard your whole life to help you walk. It's getting tired now and relies on arch support in your shoe to do its job. These flimsy flip-flops have nothing. Please save them for hanging out around the pool. And even better, replace these with a sturdier pair (pick one that can't fold in half easily).

Alas, you push through my pain and even manage a stop for a new pair of shoes to match your party outfit for tomorrow. I'm glad you tried them on—you haven't been a true size 8 in maybe a decade.



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*Among doctors who recommend liquid nutritional products to their patients.

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Ensure
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Between your pregnancies, which loosened my ligaments, and years of weight bearing and wear and tear that weakened my tendons, I'm a tad bigger than I used to be. The half size up helps a lot.

Pamper Me, Please!

You head to the bathroom to shower before bed and find your husband sitting on the floor, using your compact mirror to examine his feet.

He's been doing it every night since his diabetes diagnosis, and boy, are his feet grateful. Too much glucose in the blood can cause nerve damage and poor blood flow, so the smallest crack or cut could turn into an ulcer without prompt care, and result in ... my worst nightmare. It's a lot more common than you think. More than half of lower-limb amputations (excluding accidents) occur in adults with diabetes. So who cares that he's using your makeup mirror, as long as he's taking care of himself?

As for me, your new shoes for tomorrow are sling backs, and my heel is in no shape to reveal so much skin. Not only is it drier with age, but all that friction from your shoe makes the top layers of skin get thick and scaly.

The pumice stone you use in the shower is great to help remove excess skin cells. (Just remember to pumice in one direction—that creates a smoother surface than

scrubbing back and forth, which splits the skin layers and causes them to grow back flaky and rough.) I actually prefer this be done at home rather than at the salon, where it can be a little brisk.

Ahhhhh. Thank you for slathering on foot cream as soon as I stepped out of the shower, especially the one with urea and lactic acid. They're strong enough to penetrate my thick skin and bring out my softer side.

The thick nail on my big toe, however, can't be helped much. It stems in part from your years in high heels, which stressed and damaged the nail so that it now grows in thicker. The best way to trim it is straight across and not too short—and polish goes a long way.

Finally, you're ready for some beauty sleep. You slip some socks on to keep me cozy. Smart move: This should help you get a few extra winks. When I'm warm, my blood vessels dilate, which allows heat to redistribute throughout your body. That helps you fall asleep faster and gives me more time to rest my weary toes so I'm ready to put my best foot forward. **R**

EXPERTS: Jamal Ahmad, MD, orthopedic foot and ankle surgeon, Rothman Institute in Philadelphia; Christopher E. Hubbard, MD, chief of foot and ankle surgery, Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Mount Sinai Beth Israel in New York City; M. Joel Morse, DPM, president of the American Society of Podiatric Dermatology; Jacqueline M. Suter, DPM, City Podiatry in New York City



Do you experience vaginal dryness, itching, irritation, or painful intercourse?

Then the **Rejoice Trial** may be right for you!

This national medical research study is evaluating an investigational medication to see if it can help reduce the severity of one of these symptoms, often experienced by postmenopausal women.

Interested?

Doctors in your area may be enrolling participants!

Call **800-70-REJOICE** (800-707-3564)
or visit **RejoiceTrial.com**
for more information and to see if you qualify.

Participants will receive reimbursement for their time, travel, and other related expenses.



NEWS FROM THE

World of Medicine

BY KELSEY KLOSS

Om for a Healthier Heart

If you prefer a downward dog to an uphill walk, your cardiovascular health still benefits. Yoga significantly reduces risk factors such as high body mass index, blood pressure, and LDL cholesterol levels, found a new study of nearly 3,000 participants in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology*. Effects were comparable to those of cardiovascular exercises like biking or walking.

A Salty Culprit Behind Headaches

In a recent study published in the journal *BMJ Open*, participants ate food with low, medium, or high sodium levels, each for 30-day periods. Those who ate foods high in sodium (about 3,300 milligrams of salt per day, what the average American consumes) had one-third more headaches than those who ate foods low in sodium (about 1,500 milligrams of salt per

day, what many experts recommend). Researchers say it could be because salt raises blood pressure, which in turn may cause headaches.

Smile for Your Skeleton

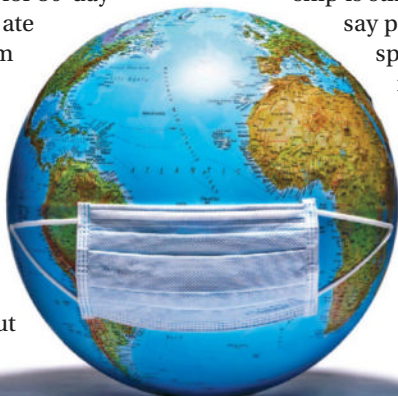
Enjoying life may pay off in an unexpected way. Finnish researchers collected data from more than 2,000 women and followed up after ten years. Women who found life less satisfying experienced 52 percent more bone weakening in their later years than those who found life more satisfying; the results were independent of lifestyle, diseases, physical activity, and other health factors. Though the exact relationship is still unclear, experts

say promoting good spirits in the elderly is just as important as promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Lift Away Belly Fat

If you're a cardio junkie, add weights to your routine to blast belly fat.

Harvard School



PROP STYLIST: ROBIN FINLAY

of Public Health researchers followed 10,500 healthy men for 12 years, assessing how their activity levels were linked to their waistlines. Men who increased the amount of time they spent lifting weights by 20 minutes a day had slimmer waists than those who increased aerobic exercise by 20 minutes a day. Researchers recommend a mix of weight training and aerobic activity for best results.

One-Minute Trick for Brain Health

Can you balance on one leg for at least 20 seconds? Japanese researchers asked more than 1,000 participants (average age: 67) to lift one leg for up to 60 seconds, then compared their performance with scans of their brains. Those who couldn't balance for more than 20 seconds were more likely to have cerebral small blood vessel disease (linked to stroke and dementia) even if they didn't have classic symptoms.

The Healthiest Place to Sit In the Office Is ...

Near a window. Brazilian researchers assessed 20 women in a workspace for a week, testing their levels of melatonin and cortisol and recording their sunlight exposure and amount of physical activity. Half worked by a window, while the other half did not. By 10 p.m., the women deprived of a window had higher cortisol levels

(linked with depression symptoms) and lower melatonin levels (linked with poor sleep).

Age Affects Aspirin Risks

New research published in *Heart* assessed data from a randomized trial of nearly 40,000 healthy women who took either 100 milligrams of aspirin or a placebo every other day for ten years and were monitored for five years after. Aspirin use was linked to a reduced risk of colon cancer and heart disease, but for the majority of women under 65, gastrointestinal bleeding risks outweighed those benefits. For those age 65 and older, the risk for heart disease and colon cancer were larger, so aspirin's benefits outweighed the intestinal risks.

The Science of Gift Giving

Consider a gift card for your friend's birthday this year. New research presented at a Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference shows that when individuals are given a choice between giving and receiving a general or specific gift, givers pride themselves on tailoring gifts to their loved ones. However, recipients prefer more general gifts, like gift cards. But don't necessarily opt for cash: Related research has found that when people get cash, they feel obligated to spend it on "useful" items rather than treating themselves.





LAUGHTER, — The Best — Medicine

Even at the doctor's office.

51 true stories and jokes about health and
the people who make it happen

Scene: The operating room. I'm reviewing the surgical checklist with the nurses.

Me: We have the surgical equipment, the heart-lung machine, antibiotics, and the replacement heart valve on hand.

Patient: You wait until now to figure this stuff out?

MARC GILLINOV, MD,
the Cleveland Clinic

"Here," says the nurse, handing the patient a urine specimen container. "The bathroom's over there." A few minutes later, the patient comes out of the bathroom.

"Thanks," he says, returning the empty container. "But there was a toilet in there, so I didn't need this after all."

TRAVIS STORK, MD, Nashville, Tennessee

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT TRACHTENBERG
ILLUSTRATIONS BY PETER ARKLE

It's
Travis Stork, MD,
from
THE DOCTORS!





Overheard in the Doctor's Office

I prescribed an inhaler for a patient's cat allergy. He came back a week later saying he was none the better. Turns out, he was spraying the inhaler on the cat. Source: sunnyskyz.com

As I leaned in to check her eyes, my older patient got a little frisky.

"You remind me of my third husband," she said coyly.

"Third husband?" I asked. "How many have you had?"

"Two."

LEON PENDRACKY, OD,
Avella, Pennsylvania

My patient announced she had good news ... and bad. "The medicine for my earache worked," she said.

"What's the bad news?" I asked.

"It tasted awful."

Since she was feeling better, I didn't have the heart to tell her they're called *eardrops* for a reason.

MURRAY GROSSAN, MD, founder of
the Grossan Institute, Los Angeles

If you have a headache,
do what it says on the
aspirin bottle: Take two
aspirin and



—ROSEANNE BARR

TEST YOUR MEDICAL VOCABULARY

Patients reported that they suffered from these ailments. Can you decipher what they meant and come up with the correct malady?

- 1) "Immaculate degeneration"
- 2) "Liza Minnelli"
- 3) "Smiling mighty Jesus"
- 4) "Fireballs of the universe"

Answers: 1) Macular degeneration; 2) Salmonella; 3) Spinal meningitis; 4) Fibroids of the uterus

Sources: overheardintheoffice.com; notalwaysright.com; reader Evelyn Rosemore, Plano, Texas; *Scrubs* magazine

Patient: Doctor, I slipped in the grocery store and really hurt myself.

Me: Where did you get hurt?

Patient: Aisle six.

JOHN MUNSHOWER, DO,
Media, Pennsylvania

I gave my patient the results of her sleep study: "It looks like you stopped breathing in your sleep over 65 times per hour."

Her response: "Did I start back?"

MICHAEL BREUS, PHD, Scottsdale, Arizona

During surgery, my fellow resident bumped heads with the surgeon.

"Ah, Dr. Jones, a meeting of the minds," he said, laughing it off.

The surgeon mumbled, "Yes. And I felt so alone."

SID SCHWAB, MD, Everett, Washington

From Our Side of The Stethoscope

I was coming to just as my doctor was finishing my colonoscopy. Feeling some pressure “back there,” I reached down and patted the doctor on the head.

“It’s OK, Yehudi,” I said. “Just go back to sleep.”

Yehudi is the name of my dog.

SHERRY MOORE, *Eau Claire, Wisconsin*

MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION ERRORS

To paraphrase Mark Twain: Be careful of medical transcripts; you may die of a misprint.

- Social history reveals this one-year-old patient does not smoke or drink and is presently unemployed.

- On the second day, the knee was better, and on the third day, it disappeared.

- Discharge status: alive but without permission.

- Exam of genitalia reveals that he is circus sized.

- Occasional, constant infrequent headaches.

- Bleeding started in the rectal area and continued all the way to Los Angeles.

- She is numb from her toes down.

Sources: gmrttranscription.com; nursebuff.com



When doctors find something in your bladder, it's never anything good, like tickets to a Yankees game.

—MIKE BIRBIGLIA



When I went to the ER to have a painful ingrown toenail removed, I was a complete basket case—sobbing, gagging, petrified ... the works. But my doctor knew how to calm me down.

“Don’t worry about a thing,” he assured me. “I just looked up how to perform this operation on YouTube.”

CHELSEA BENDER,

Hamburg, Pennsylvania

The day after I had surgery on my leg, a nurse came into my hospital room with a box in her hand. “Are you ready for this?”

“What is it?” I asked.

“Fleet enema. Didn’t your doctor tell you about it?”

“No.”

She rechecked the orders. “Whoa!” she bellowed. “That didn’t say Fleet enema. It said feet elevated!”

JULIA FUSSELL,

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Patient: I'm worried about this birthmark.

Doctor: Birthmark, you say? How long have you had it?

Source: overheardintheoffice.com

My husband's new "unbreakable" titanium eyeglasses broke. When he brought the many pieces back to the optometrist to have the glasses replaced, the assistant asked what had happened.

"They fell under the lawn mower," he explained.

"Oh," she said, nodding. "Were you wearing them at the time?"

SUSAN STRONG,

South Glastonbury, Connecticut



Lawyer: Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

Doctor: The autopsy started around 8:30 p.m.

Lawyer: And Mr. Eddington was dead at the time?

Lawyer: Doctor, did you say he was shot in the woods?

Doctor: No, I said he was shot in the lumbar region.

Lawyer: Now, Doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, in most cases he just passes quietly away and doesn't know anything about it until the next morning?

Source: rinkworks.com

First, the doctor told me the good news. He said that I was going to have a disease named after me.

—STEVE MARTIN



Overheard at the Nurses' Station

A gentleman calls our office with questions about an upcoming test he is scheduled for, and we talk at length about the procedure.

Patient: I'm sorry to have so many questions.

Me: Oh, that's no problem. You can always call and ask for clarification when you need it.

Patient: Thank you very much, Clara Fication! You've been very helpful.

Source: notalwaysright.com

After discussing a patient, the doctor ended his conversation by telling me, "I love you." Following an awkward pause, he said, "I'm sorry, you were telling me what to do, so it made me think I was speaking with my wife."

Source: *Scrubs* magazine



4 MEDICAL EXCUSES FOR MISSING WORK (PEOPLE ACTUALLY THOUGHT MIGHT FLY)

- "My child stuck a mint up my nose, and I had to go to the emergency room to have it removed."
- "I got sick from reading too much."
- Employee got stuck in the blood pressure machine at the grocery store and couldn't get out.
- "My dog wasn't feeling well, so I tasted his food, and then I got sick."

Sources: careerbuilder.com; blog.oregonlive.com

I was working in a long-term-care facility, and there was a celebration for one of the residents. It was her 100th birthday. She was quite somnolent as the party began, so I asked her, "Do you know how old you are today?"

"No, how old am I?"

"You're 100 years old."

"Well, no wonder I'm so tired."

Source: healthdegrees.com

Scene: I answer a patient's phone call ...

Me: Dermatology, how may I help you?

Patient: Hi, I just had an autopsy. I'd like to know my results.

Source: notalwaysright.com

Call it ... *carma*! A car belonging to a pregnant patient was broken into. The only thing that was stolen was a wine bottle in a brown paper bag. It turns out, that's where she was keeping her urine sample, which she'd brought in to be tested.

JANET GROW, *Overland Park, Kansas*

I asked a young mother in our neonatal unit why she thought we had so many expectant mothers from her small town. She said, "Well, we don't have cable." Source: *Scrubs* magazine

The doctor explained to his patient that she suffered from cervicitis, or inflammation of the cervix. Concerned, she demanded that he test her husband for it too.

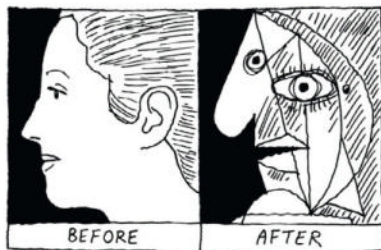
The doctor assured her, "I'm positive your husband does not have cervicitis."

She shot back, "How do you know? You haven't examined him yet."

ROIANNE LOPE, *Pine Hill, New Jersey*

I was going to have plastic surgery until I noticed that the doctor's office was full of portraits by Picasso.

—RITA RUDNER



Take Two Jokes And Call Me in the Morning!

A doctor tells his wife, “You’re a terrible cook, you spend too much money, and you’re a lousy lover!”

Two weeks later, he comes home to find her making out with his partner.

“What’s going on here?!” he demands.

“Just getting a second opinion,” she replies.

Submitted by **DEBORAH AXELROD, MD,**
New York University
Perlmutter Cancer Center

MEDICINE IN THE NEWS

Actual stories ripped from the headlines:

● “Utah Poison Control Center reminds everyone not to take poison”

Source: kizaz.com

● “Elderly woman breaks hip at Niagara hospital, told by staff to call ambulance”

Source: the Toronto Star

● “Breathing oxygen linked to staying alive”

Source: Masoc County News (Texas)

● “Troopers: Trucker pulling his own tooth caused accident that congested I-20/59”

Source: al.com



My male roommate and I
mixed up our nicotine and
testosterone patches.
He got cranky and hungry.
I got a raise and a corner
office.

—KAREN RIPLEY



“Did you hear what happened to Mel?” one friend said to another. “He was seeing his doctor for six months because of chest pains and shortness of breath. Last week, he dropped dead from cancer.”

“That’s terrible,” says the other friend. “Well, I told him a hundred times to go see my doctor.”

“Is he any good?”

“Good? He’s the best! If he treats you for heart problems ... you’ll die of heart problems.”

Submitted by **STEVEN LAMM, MD,**
NYU Langone Medical Center

Mr. Harper sued a hospital, saying that after his wife had surgery there, she lost all interest in sex.

A hospital spokesperson replied, “Mrs. Harper was admitted for cataract surgery. All we did was correct her eyesight.”

Submitted by **AMAR SAFDAR, MD,**
NYU Langone Medical Center 

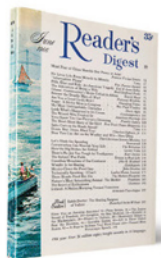
DR. STORK'S
FAVORITE
JOKE

CHUCKLE

A frantic man calls his doctor:
"My wife is pregnant, and her
contractions are only two minutes
apart!"

"Is this her first child?"
the doctor asks.

"No!" the man shouts.
"This is her husband!!"



**This article first
appeared in the
June 1966 issue of
Reader's Digest.**

A little boy forges a strong
connection with the local
telephone operator

THE Voice IN THE Box

BY PAUL VILLIARD

WHEN I WAS QUITE YOUNG, my family had one of the first telephones in the neighborhood. I remember well the polished oak case fastened to the wall on the lower stair landing. The shiny receiver hung on the side of the box. I even remember the number: 105. I was too little to reach the telephone, but I used to listen with fascination when my mother talked to it. Once she lifted me up to speak to my father, who was away on business. Magic!



Then I discovered that somewhere inside that wonderful device lived an amazing person—her name was “Information Please,” and there was nothing that she did not know. My mother could ask her for anybody’s number; when our clock ran down, Information Please immediately supplied the correct time.

MY FIRST personal experience with this genie-in-the-receiver came one day while my mother was visiting a neighbor. Amusing myself at the tool bench in the basement, I whacked my finger with a hammer. The pain was terrible, but there didn’t seem to be much use crying, because there was no one home to offer sympathy. I walked around the house sucking my throbbing finger, finally arriving at the stairway. The telephone! Quickly I ran for the footstool in the parlor and dragged it to the landing. Climbing up, I unhooked the receiver and held it to my ear. “Information Please,” I said into the mouthpiece just above my head.

A click or two, and a small, clear voice spoke into my ear. “Information.”

“I hurt my fingerrrr—” I wailed into the phone. The tears came readily enough, now that I had an audience.

“Isn’t your mother home?” came the question.

“Nobody’s home but me,” I blubbered.

“Are you bleeding?”

“No,” I replied. “I hit it with the hammer, and it hurts.”

“Can you open your icebox?” she

asked. I said I could.

“Then chip off a little piece of ice, and hold it on your finger. That will stop the hurt. Be careful when you use the ice pick,” she admonished. “And don’t cry. You’ll be all right.”

After that, I called Information Please for everything. I asked her for help with my geography, and she told me where Philadelphia was, and the Orinoco, the

romantic river that I was going to explore when I grew up. She helped me with my arithmetic, and she told me that my pet chipmunk—I had caught him in the park just the day before—would eat fruit and nuts.

And there was the time that my pet canary passed away. I called Information Please and told her the sad story. She listened, then said the usual things that grown-ups say to soothe a child. But I was unconsoled: Why was it that birds should sing so beautifully and bring joy to whole families, only to end as a heap of feathers,

“
***I called
Information
Please for
everything:
geography and
arithmetic
help—and what
to feed my pet
chipmunk.***

feet up, on the bottom of a cage?

She must have sensed my deep concern, for she said quietly, "Paul, always remember that there are other worlds to sing in."

Somehow I felt better.

Another day I was at the telephone. "Information," said the now familiar voice.

"How do you spell *fix*?" I asked.

"Fix something? *F-i-x*."

At that instant, my sister, who took unholy joy in scaring me, jumped off the stairs at me with a banshee shriek—"Yaaaaaaaaa!" I fell off the stool, pulling the receiver out of the box by its roots. We were both terrified—Information Please was no longer there, and I was not at all sure that I hadn't hurt her when I pulled the receiver out.

Minutes later, there was a man on the porch. "I'm a telephone repairman," he said. "I was working down the street, and the operator said there might be some trouble at this number." He reached for the receiver in my hand. "What happened?"

I told him.

"Well, we can fix that in a minute or two." He opened the telephone box, exposing a maze of wires, and coiled and fiddled for a while with the end of the receiver cord, tightening things with a small screwdriver. He jiggled the hook up and down a few times, then spoke into the phone. "Hi, this is Pete. Everything's under control at 105. The kid's sister scared him, and

he pulled the cord out of the box."

He hung up, smiled, gave me a pat on the head, and walked out the door.

ALL THIS TOOK PLACE in a small town in the Pacific Northwest. Then, when I was nine years old, we moved across the country to Boston—and I missed my mentor acutely. Information Please belonged in that old wooden box back home, and I somehow never thought of trying the tall, skinny new phone that sat on a small table in the hall.

Yet, as I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations never really left me; often in moments of doubt and perplexity, I would recall the serene sense of security I had when I knew that I could call Information Please and get the right answer. I appreciated how very patient, understanding, and kind she was to have wasted her time on a little boy.

A few years later, on my way west to college, my plane put down at Seattle. I had about half an hour between plane connections, and I spent 15 minutes or so on the phone with my sister, who lived there now, happily mellowed by marriage and motherhood. Then, really without thinking what I was doing, I dialed my hometown operator and said, "Information Please."

Miraculously, I heard again the small, clear voice I knew so well: "Information."

I hadn't planned this, but I heard

myself saying, "Could you tell me, please, how to spell the word *fix*?"

There was a long pause. Then came the softly spoken answer. "I guess," said Information Please, "that your finger must have healed by now."

I laughed. "So it's really still you," I said. "I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during all that time ..."

"I wonder," she replied, "if you know how much you meant to me? I never had any children, and I used to look forward to your calls. Silly, wasn't it?"

It didn't seem silly, but I didn't say so. Instead I told her how often I had thought of her over the years, and I asked if I could call her again when I came back to visit my sister after the first semester was over.

"Please do. Just ask for Sally."

"Goodbye, Sally." It sounded strange for Information Please to have a name. "If I run into any chipmunks, I'll tell them to eat fruit and nuts."

"Do that," she said. "And I expect

one of these days, you'll be off for the Orinoco. Well, goodbye."

JUST THREE MONTHS later, I was back again at the Seattle airport. A different voice answered, "Information," and I asked for Sally.

"Are you a friend?"

"Yes," I said. "An old friend."

"Then I'm sorry to have to tell you. Sally had been working only part-time in the last few years because she was ill. She died five weeks ago." But before I could hang up, she said, "Wait a minute. Did you say your name was Villiard?"

"Yes."

"Well, Sally left a message for you. She wrote it down."

"What was it?" I asked, almost knowing in advance what it would be.

"Here it is; I'll read it—'Tell him I still say there are other worlds to sing in. He'll know what I mean.'"

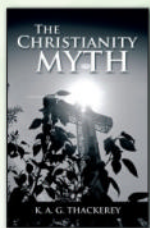
I thanked her and hung up. I did know what Sally meant. **R**

"
***I told her how
often I had
thought of her
and asked if I
could call again.
"Please do. Just
ask for Sally."***
"

WINNING AT LIFE

I'm so glad I moved walking distance from a supermarket.
Now all I have to do to get groceries is drive across the street!

 @TAYLORCOMEDY



The Christianity Myth

K. A. G. Thackerey

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The Christianity Myth is a very controversial, eye-opening expose that challenges Christianity's very essence. In the book, K.A.G. Thackerey examines what little we know and what little we think we know about first-century Christianity. He concludes that there are two ways of explaining how Christianity started. One way is the traditional way, with divine intervention; and the other way is Thackerey's way, without divine intervention. Thackerey's novel and intriguing conclusions pose very provocative ideas that are destined to ruffle more than just a few feathers. Christians and non-Christians alike will find it a riveting read.



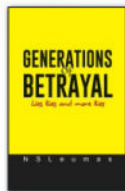
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The Tale of Tumeleng

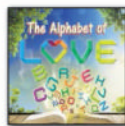
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After waiting two years, elephants, Ayanna and Jabari proudly introduce their newborn daughter, Tumeleng to the herd. But, Tumeleng's very curious nature could lead her into dangerous situations. Will she learn to heed her parents' warnings? Find out!



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JOGGING ON THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

Largely forgotten by the American public,
astronauts have been orbiting Earth for 15 years.
Here's how they spend their days.

BY CHARLES FISHMAN
FROM THE ATLANTIC



Due to zero gravity, astronaut Reid Wiseman is tethered to the treadmill when working out.



hen humans move to space, we are the aliens, the extraterrestrials. And so, when living in space, the oddness never quite goes away. Consider something as elemental as sleep. When an astronaut is ready to sleep aboard the International Space Station, he or she climbs into a sleeping bag tethered to a wall in a private cubicle the size of an airplane lavatory.

“On Earth,” says Col. Mike Hopkins, who returned in March 2014 from a six-month tour on the space station, “after a long day, when you first lie down on your bed, there’s an immediate sense of relaxation.” But in space, there is no gravity, and thus, no lying down. “You never have that feeling of taking weight off your feet—or that emotional relief.”

Sleep position presents its own challenges. The main question is whether you want your arms inside or outside the sleeping bag. If you leave your arms out, they float free in zero gravity, often drifting out from your body, giving a sleeping astronaut the look of a wacky ballet dancer. “I’m an inside guy,” Hopkins says. “I like to be cocooned up.”

Spaceflight has faded from American consciousness even as our performance in space has reached a new level of accomplishment. Every day, half a dozen men and women are living and working in orbit on the International Space Station—and have been since November 2000.

The station, a vast outpost big enough that it can be spotted tracing across the night sky when it passes overhead, is a joint operation: half American, half Russian. Navigation and operations are shared, and the role of station commander alternates between a cosmonaut and an astronaut. The Russians and Americans typically keep to their own modules during the workday. But the crews often gather for meals and hang out together after work.

As a facility, a spacecraft, and a habitation, the station has its own personality and quirks. On the station, the ordinary becomes peculiar. The exercise bike has no handlebars. It also has no seat. With no gravity, it’s just as easy to pedal furiously, feet strapped in, without either. You can watch a movie while you pedal by floating a laptop anywhere you want. But station residents have to be careful about staying in one place too long. Without gravity to help circulate air, the carbon dioxide you exhale has a tendency to form an invisible cloud around your

head, resulting in a carbon-dioxide headache. And while the food is much better than it was 20 years ago, most of it's still vacuum-packed or canned. The arrival of a few oranges on a cargo ship every couple of months is cause for jubilation.

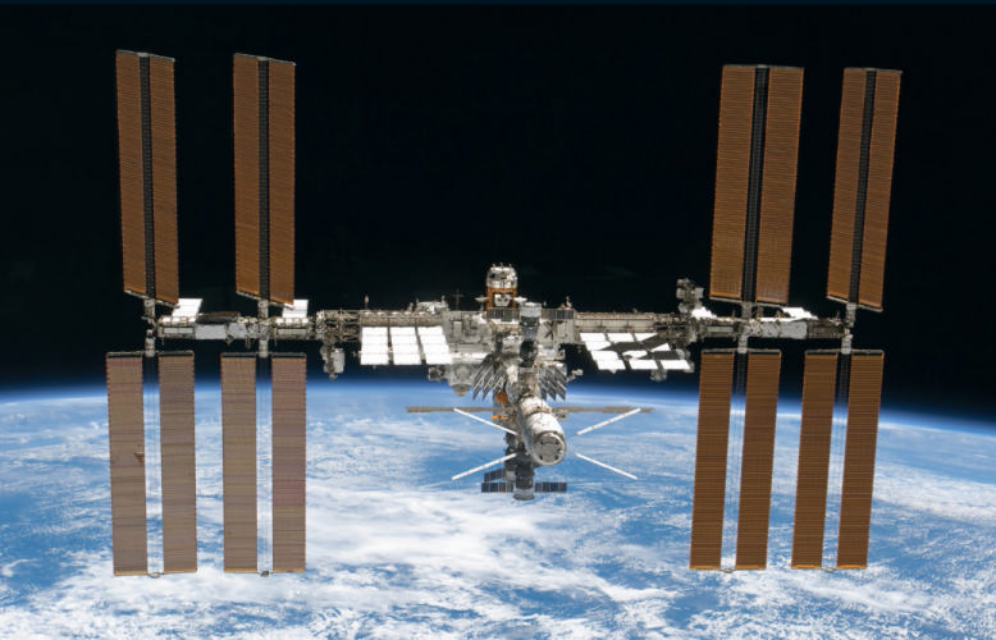
"HEY, HOUSTON, this is Station. Good morning. We're ready for the morning DPC."

That's U.S. station commander Steven Swanson, hailing Mission Control from orbit one morning last July. Every day starts and ends with a daily planning conference, or DPC. Although the astronauts live and work in the space station, they don't fly it or otherwise control it—Mission

Control in Houston and Moscow do. And life on the station is managed via spreadsheet: Every minute of each astronaut's workday is mapped out in blocks devoted to specific tasks. Astronauts typically start work by 7:30 a.m. and stop at 7:00 p.m. They are supposed to have the weekends off, but Saturday is devoted to cleaning the station—vital, but no more fun in orbit than housecleaning down here.

Highly educated, highly motivated astronauts end up doing one task after another, all day long, some of them fun and intellectually challenging (conducting research with ground-based scientists), some of them tedious (recording the serial numbers of the items in the trash

The space station is as long as a football field and sees a fresh sunrise every 92 minutes.



before sending them to be burned up in the atmosphere). No one signs up to fly through space in order to empty the urine container or swap out air filters.

From 2003 to 2010, ten astronauts who served on the station each kept a diary as part of a study on people living in extreme environments. The anonymous diaries reveal men and women who are thrilled by life in space, though occasionally bored and sometimes seriously irritated.

"I had to laugh to myself at the procedures today," wrote one station astronaut. "To replace a lightbulb, I had to have safety glasses and a vacuum cleaner handy. This was in case the bulb broke. However, the actual bulb is encased in a plastic enclosure, so even if it did break, the shards would be completely contained. Also, I had to take a photo of the installed bulb—before turning it on. Why? I have no idea! It's just the way NASA does things."

"It has been a pretty tedious week with tasks that were clearly allotted too little time on the schedule," wrote another. "Talking to [a Mission Control staffer] today, I realized he just doesn't understand how we work up here."

That's a pretty standard complaint, of course: Soldiers at the front line have one impression of how the war is going; military headquarters has another. All report getting along well. But from the astronauts' perspective, it's hard for the ground staff

to understand life in space. As with anything else, the privileges and joys of working in space don't neutralize ordinary office politics.

STILL, ASTRONAUTS never tire of watching Earth spin below—one wrote of stopping at a window and being so captivated that he watched an entire orbit. "I have been looking at Earth from the point of view of a visiting extraterrestrial," wrote another. "Where would I put down, and how would I go about making contact?"

The diary entries make it very clear that six months is a long time to be in space—a long time to go without family and friends, without fresh food, without feeling sunshine or rain or the pleasures of gravity; a long time to be tethered to the tasks of maintaining body and station, on a ship with no bathing or laundry facilities.

On the station, NASA and the astronauts themselves have had to be more attentive to morale. The space station has a telephone—astronauts can call anyone they want, whenever it's convenient—and their families get specially programmed iPads for private videoconferences. The astronauts have private conversations with NASA psychologists once every two weeks.

The space station is stocked with movies and books. But Ed Lu, one of the earliest crew members, decided that he wasn't going to spend his free time doing something so earthly as reading a paperback. The singular ex-

perience of space is the flying—not flying the spaceship you're in, but flying, yourself, inside it. That's what really makes you an astronaut—the almost unbelievable liberation from gravity.

I don't know if I'm ever coming back here, Lu remembers thinking. "I wanted to do things I could never do at home. I decided to learn to fly better, to learn acrobatics," he says. "I would pick a module and say to myself, Every time I go through this module, I'm going to fly through without touching the sides. I would pick a compartment and say, Every time I go through this compartment, I'm going to do a double flip."

"What's it like to live in zero G?" asks Sandra Magnus, who took three spaceflights. "It's a lot of fun," she says, laughing. "The thing is, in space, Newton's laws rule your life. If you're doing something as simple as typing on a laptop, you're exerting force on the keyboard, and you end up getting pushed away and floating off. You have to hold yourself down with your feet."

GRAVITY IS AN indispensable organizing tool, she says, one you don't appreciate until you have to live without it. Magnus liked to cook for her colleagues on the station, find-

ing new dishes to make with the food NASA supplied, especially with the delivery of, say, a fresh onion. "It takes hours," she says. "Why hours? Think about one thing: when you cook, how often you throw things in a trash can. How can you do that? Because gravity lets you throw things in the trash.

Without gravity, you have to figure out what to do. I put the trash on a piece of duct tape, but even so, dealing with the trash takes forever."

When you're in zero G, all the fluids in your body are in zero G, too, so astronauts often feel stuffy-headed from fluid migrating to their sinuses; some end up

literally puffy faced.

Zero G also causes bone-mass loss. Bones regenerate and grow partly in response to the work they have to do each day. Without weight to support in space, the bones make fresh cells at a slower rate; they thin and weaken. A postmenopausal woman on Earth might lose 1 percent of bone mass a year. An astronaut of either gender can lose 1 percent a month.

The antidote is almost relentless exercise. The astronauts have three exercise machines—the seatless bike, a treadmill, and a weight machine with a 600-pound capacity. Astronauts are scheduled for two and a half hours of exercise a day, six days a week.

“ ”

SIX MONTHS IS
A LONG TIME TO
GO WITHOUT
FAMILY AND
FRIENDS,
WITHOUT THE
PLEASURES OF
GRAVITY.

Sweating in the craft isn't pleasant. "On the ground, when you're riding the bike, the sweat drips off you," says Hopkins. "Up there, the sweat sticks to you—you have pools of sweat on your arms, your head, around your eyes." The astronauts use large wipes and dry towels to clean off. "The shower was one of those things that I missed."

The focus on fitness is as much about keeping any individual astronaut healthy as it is about science and the future. NASA is worried about two things: recovery time once astronauts return home and, crucially, how to maintain strength and fitness for the two and a half years or more that it would take to make a round-trip to Mars. Figuring out how to get to Mars safely, in fact, underlies much of what happens on the station.

That's because we don't yet understand all the implications of long-duration spaceflight. "Five years ago," says John Charles of NASA's Human Research Program, "we had an astronaut all of a sudden say, 'Hey, my eyesight has changed. I'm three months into this flight, and I can't read the checklists anymore.'" It turns out that all that fluid shifting upward in zero G "pushes on the eyeball from behind and flattens it," says Charles. "Many astronauts slowly get farsighted in orbit."

Bone mass and aerobic fitness all return to normal, for the most part, back on Earth. But astronauts' eyes do not.

CAPT. SCOTT KELLY and Col. Tim Kopra are standing back-to-back on a steel platform in the Neutral Buoyancy Lab in Houston, outfitted in NASA space suits. A crane slowly lowers the astronauts into a huge swimming pool. Kelly and Kopra will spend six hours underwater, doing a practice space walk, going through every step of replacing part of the space station's robotic arm. It's a maintenance task they will do in space in November.

They spend 30 minutes getting latched into the suits, each of which weighs 230 pounds empty. "See how each astronaut has three or four guys helping him?" says astronaut Kevin Ford. "On the station, it's just one guy. The procedure to get into the space suits and out the hatch is a 400-step checklist. And you don't want to skip too many of those steps."

Spacewalking is the ultimate thrill ride. When you're outside the station, sealed into your one-person spacecraft, you are literally an independent astronomical body, a tiny moon of Earth, orbiting at 17,500 miles an hour. When you look at Earth between your boots, that first step is more than one million feet down.

But spacewalking also exemplifies just how dangerous space is, how a single connector not properly mated can lead to catastrophe, or how a single O-ring can lead to destruction, as it did with the *Challenger* shuttle disaster in 1986. NASA grapples with risk

by wringing all the surprise out of it. All the scripting, the rehearsal, the design considerations—life in space isn't just stranger than folks realize; it's harder.

The space walk is in some ways a microcosm of the whole space-station program: difficult, awe-inspiring, and strangely tautological. Astronauts walk in space to maintain and repair the space station so that future astronauts will have a base to fly to.

And they fly in space because of human ambition, because nothing tests our ability and character like stretching ourselves beyond what we can do now. We fly in space because space is the eighth continent. We fly

in space as curious explorers now because one day we may need to fly in space, as miners or settlers.

These are long-horizon ideas—centuries long. Even so, what's missing from them is a sense of how hard living, working, and traveling in space still is. We take for granted something that is anything but routine. The astronauts experience this every day.

One day on the station, Mike Fincke decided it would be fun to call one of his professors from MIT.

"So the department secretary answers the phone," Fincke says. "She said, 'Well, he's busy right now.' Pause. 'But I guess because you're calling from space, I'll put you through.'" **R**

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Since it was launched in 2000, the ISS has been home to 216 men and women.







Saving lives, comforting strangers,
battling bears: Do animals
have instincts to help human beings?
These four pets do.

The Most Heroic Dogs in America

BY JEFF CAMPBELL

FROM THE BOOK *DAISY TO THE RESCUE*

THESE DAYS, YOU'D BE HARD-PRESSED to find a scientist who doesn't acknowledge that most animals have the ability to feel emotion in some way. In the past decade, a tremendous amount of research has focused on how animals think and feel and the possibility that they possess reason and morals. We may never know what motivates animals when they go out of their way to save people, as they do in these stories, but in these moments, it's hard not to see striking evidence of empathy, love, and perhaps a basic understanding of life.

ROSELLE'S FINEST HOUR

BREED: Labrador retriever

WHERE: New York City

On the morning of September 11, 2001, computer sales manager Michael Hingson, who is blind, went early to his office on the 78th floor of the North Tower of the World Trade Center to prepare for a meeting. As Michael worked, his guide dog, a

Labrador retriever named Roselle, dozed by his feet.

At 8:46 a.m., a tremendous boom rocked the building, eliciting screams throughout the floor. Michael grabbed Roselle's harness, trusting that the dog would lead him out of danger, and they navigated their way to a stairwell.

"Forward," Michael instructed, and they descended the first of 1,463 steps

to the lobby. After about ten floors, the stairwell grew crowded and hot, and the fumes from jet fuel had made it hard to breathe.

When a woman became hysterical, yelling that they wouldn't make it, Roselle nudged the woman until she finally petted the dog, calmed herself, and kept walking down the stairs.

Around the 30th floor, firefighters started passing Michael on their way up. Each one stopped to offer him assistance. He declined but let Roselle be petted, providing many of the firefighters with what would be their last experience of unconditional love.

After about 45 minutes, Michael and Roselle reached the lobby, and 15 minutes later, they emerged outside to a scene of chaos. Suddenly the police yelled for everyone to run as the South Tower began to collapse.

Michael kept a tight grip on Roselle's harness, using voice and hand commands, as they ran to a street opposite the crumbling tower. The street bounced like a trampoline, the sky rained debris, and "a deafening roar" like a hellish freight train filled the air. Hours later, Michael and Roselle made it home safely.

In the months that followed, Michael became a spokesperson for Guide Dogs for the Blind, the organization that had trained Roselle. Together, they spread their message about trust and teamwork.



In 2004, Roselle developed a blood disorder, and she retired from guiding and touring three years later. She died in 2011.

"I've had many other dogs," Michael wrote, "but there is only one Roselle."

LITTLE JOE VERSUS THE BLACK BEAR

BREED: Yorkshire terrier

WHERE: Ringwood, New Jersey

Deborah Epstein's Yorkie, Joe, proved that guard dogs sometimes come in small packages. On a warm July day in 2013, Joe and his owner were lounging on Deborah's front porch when the phone rang. Deborah stepped inside to answer it, leaving the front door open. Seconds later, Joe began barking excitedly. That's not unusual for a terrier, especially this little shelter dog, but he "sounded a little more furious than usual," Deborah said.

She turned around to see a 100-pound black bear making its way toward Joe's food bowl in the living room. Big mistake. "You don't touch [Joe's food]," said Deborah. She watched in awe as the six-pound dog growled, barked, lunged, and nipped at the bear until it retreated. "Joe chased it right back out the door," Deborah said. The bear escaped into the woods behind Deborah's house.

The prospect of losing his food may have propelled Joe into action, but he managed to defend his territory and protect his owner at the same time.

"I saved him from the pound, and he saved me from a bear," Deborah said. "We're even."

SHANA'S FROZEN DIG

BREED: German shepherd-wolf mix

WHERE: Alden, New York

In 1999, Eve and Norman Fertig, founders of the Enchanted Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, saved a two-week-old half-wolf, half-German shepherd from a puppy mill. The pup they named Shana grew to an intimidating 160 pounds, but Eve said the dog trailed her like "a little lamb."

One October several years back, as the Fertigs, both then 81, fed injured rescue animals housed in one of the buildings on their land,

an unseasonable, violent snowstorm blew in. When the couple went outside to check the weather, several trees fell, trapping them in a narrow alley between two buildings. Eve and Norman weren't wearing coats or gloves and couldn't climb over or duck below the tree trunks. For the next two and a half hours, they huddled together for warmth as the snow piled higher.

"We were in big trouble," Eve said. "I told Norman, 'We can't stay here. We'll die.'"

Around 9:30 p.m., Shana, who was outside, began burrowing toward Eve and Norman in the deep snow. It took the dog nearly two hours, but eventually she cleared a narrow tunnel about 20 feet long stretching from the front porch of the main house to the Fertigs' location.

When Shana finally broke through the snow and reached the curled-up couple, she gave one short bark. Her message was clear: Follow me.



Norman looked at the tunnel, which was a foot high, and refused, telling Eve he'd spent too much time in foxholes in Okinawa during World War II. But in her no-nonsense Bronx accent, Eve changed her husband's mind: "Norman, if you do not follow me, I will get a divorce."

Shana grabbed Eve's jacket and guided the 86-pound woman onto her back. Norman clutched Eve's ankles, and for the next two hours, Shana pulled the couple through the tunnel.

Shana finally reached the house around 2 a.m., and the Fertigs managed to get just inside the front door. They collapsed with fatigue. The storm had knocked out the electricity and heat, but Shana lay next to them all night. "She kept us alive," Eve said.

Firefighters arrived later that morning and were astonished at the sight. Eve said, "They kept looking at that tunnel and saying, 'We've never seen anything like it.'"

After the ordeal, it took five months for Shana's feet to heal from the injuries she received while digging.

MAX'S PAINFUL CHOICE

BREED: German shepherd

WHERE: Novato, California

Late one night in February 2014, Jack Farell, 80, called 911 to report a dog attack. He had woken up bleeding on his kitchen floor, his left arm in the jaws of his adopted German shepherd, Max. "I thought he had turned on me," said Jack, a retired firefighter.

But as emergency personnel figured out later, Max had actually saved Jack from carbon monoxide poisoning.

When Jack had gotten out of bed during the night, he'd passed out from inhaling the gas and collapsed to the floor. Max likely tried to wake the man by clawing his face, to no avail. So the dog took Jack's left arm in his mouth and pulled the comatose man from the bedroom and down the hall, presumably intending to drag Jack out of the house.

When Jack learned the truth, his heart flooded with gratitude. "He saved my life," Jack said.

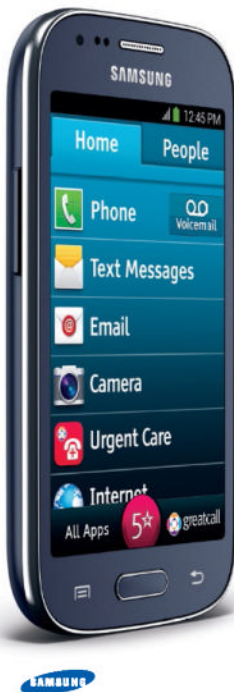
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To See Millions Of Colors

BY BETH DREHER



FOR CONCETTA ANTICO, the night sky bursts with sapphire and violet; a pink rose is tinged with gold and azure; a stone pathway is a rainbow of oranges, yellows, greens, blues, and pale reds.

Antico has “super vision,” or tetrachromacy, a rare genetic condition that allows her to see nearly 100 million colors. Compare that with the one million colors people with normal vision can see.

While super vision isn’t unusual in animals—a few species of birds choose mates based on subtle color differences in feathers, and some insects can see color wavelengths that flowers reflect—it’s estimated that the condition affects only 1 percent of human beings.

“I see more nuanced shades and

more colors in low light,” says Antico. “If you and I look at a leaf, I may see magenta running around the outside of the leaf or turquoise in certain parts where you would just see dark green,” Antico says. “Where the light is making shadows on the walls, I’m seeing violets and lavenders and turquoise. You’re just seeing gray.”

"She truly does see the world differently than we do," says neurologist Wendy Martin, who has studied Antico's case.

As a child in Australia, Antico knew she had a unique point of view. At seven, she painted vivid reproductions of works by Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Monet in oils. Now she makes her living as a painter and an art instructor in San Diego, where she moved with her husband, Jason Pizzinat, in the mid-1980s. The colors she sees in Southern California's flora and fauna make up her vast palette.

Antico readily volunteers for scientific studies, hoping that research on her will also lead to a better understanding of color blindness, which affects the vision of her 12-year-old daughter. Color blindness can be caused by the same genetic mutation

as tetrachromacy. "I want everyone to realize how beautiful the world is," she says. (Neither of her sons has the mutation.)

Despite Antico's enhanced visual experience, there's a downside to full-spectrum vision: sensory overload.

"When I wake up, I stare out the window for a little while because I can't help but see all the colors outside," Antico told the BBC. "I see all the colors in the wood floor as I'm walking to the bathroom. I notice all the colors in the toothpaste. Downstairs, the fruit in the bowl [is bursting with color]."

The grocery store is "a nightmare," Antico continued. Down every aisle, "it's [an assault] of color."

Perhaps as a result, Antico says her favorite color is white. "It is so peaceful and restful for my eyes." **R**

“

The mutation that led to Antico's super vision also caused her daughter's color blindness.

* * *

RIDDLE ME THIS

QUESTION: I multiply, but never breed;
live on air, but never breathe. Devour much, but never eat;
I'm often measured by my heat.
What am I?

ANSWER: Fire.

To frack or not to frack? A science writer who inherited a share in a Texas oil well is forced to choose.

My J.R. Ewing Moment

BY WILLIAM SARGENT FROM THE *CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR*



WILLIAM SARGENT is a consultant for PBS's *NOVA* and the author of 20 books about science and the environment.

EAST TEXAS BETWEEN Houston and Galveston is a low flatland of cayenne pepper heat coming off the tepid waters of Galveston Bay. The cries of laughing gulls and great-tailed grackles fill the salty air. Donkey-head wells and offshore rigs are moored opposite shrimp boats.

I'm here to check out an oil well I own. And I've come to answer a question: Should I hang on to its mineral rights and keep getting my small royalty check each month? Or sell them to a wildcat suitor who wants to "frack" the well?

This could be my J. R. Ewing moment.

Like many Americans, I've followed the debate over fracking from a distance. The technology, which uses prodigious amounts of pressurized water laced with chemicals to break shale rock and liberate entombed oil or natural gas, is either going to help the United States achieve an elusive goal—to become

ILLUSTRATION BY JOE MCKENDRY



energy independent—or unleash a host of problems.

As a science writer from a famously liberal state, Massachusetts, I'm keenly aware of how my values clash with famously conservative Texas. In Massachusetts, we post "frog crossing" signs at every vernal pool. In Texas, they post "pipeline crossing" signs at almost every intersection.

YES, EVERYDAY FOLKS OWN OIL WELLS

I became an oil well owner in 1968, at the age of 22. My father was running for governor, and he had to divest himself of many holdings to avoid

conflicts of interest. He gave my sisters and me part ownership of a well that he had bought from an old Army buddy. That might sound pretty grand, but the well had been in operation for years and was producing a trickle, enough to pay each of us \$28 a month.

It wasn't that unusual at the time to own an oil well. In many countries, the government owns the rights to oil, gas, and other underground resources and controls development. Here, oil companies deal directly with the people who own the booty, which tends to encourage entrepreneurialism and development, for better or worse.

In 1973, I started receiving letters

from Exxon explaining that the company planned to “unitize” our oil field, so we’d be paid a percentage of what the entire field produced rather than what came from our individual well. There was a risk: We could earn less. The company offered to buy me and my siblings out for \$5,000 each.

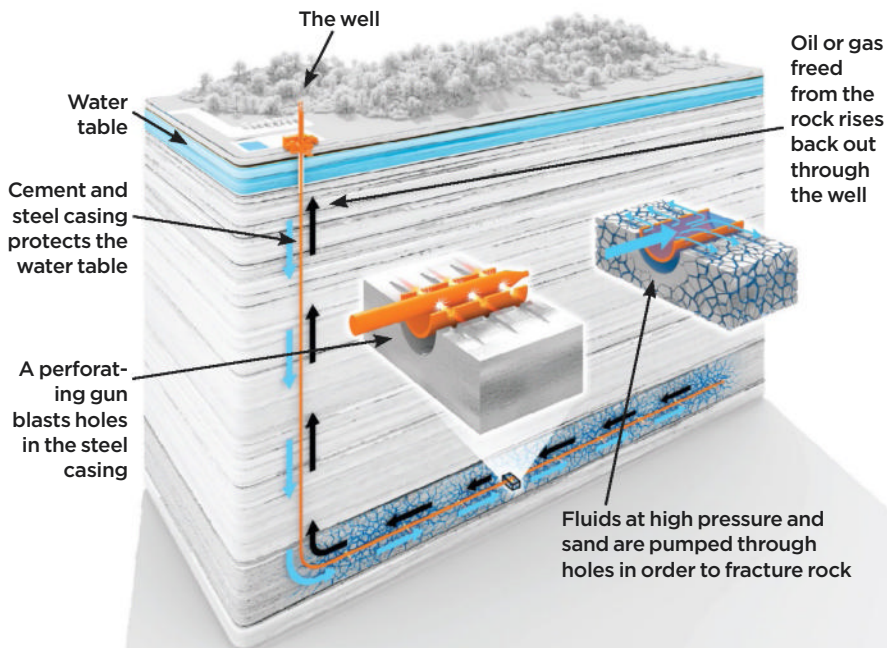
My sisters were elated. One bought a horse with the money; the other put an addition on her house. I figured that if Exxon wanted our well so badly, they had to know something I didn’t, so I hung on to my share. The

royalties plunged to about \$10 a month.

I was beginning to feel a little less like J. R. Ewing and a lot more like Cliff Barnes, the dupe who was always getting outfoxed by the Ewings. But time passed and technology progressed until, last year, I started receiving letters and phone calls again. They were from wildcatters who wanted to use newer techniques to siphon the remaining oil out of the field, now called the Webster tract. In some cases, they were sending \$6,000 checks to buy my share.

Two Ways to Tap Oil and Gas

1. FRACKING Also known as hydraulic fracturing, this process uses pressurized liquids and sand to break rock and release trapped fossil fuels.



THE FRACKING DEBATE GETS PERSONAL

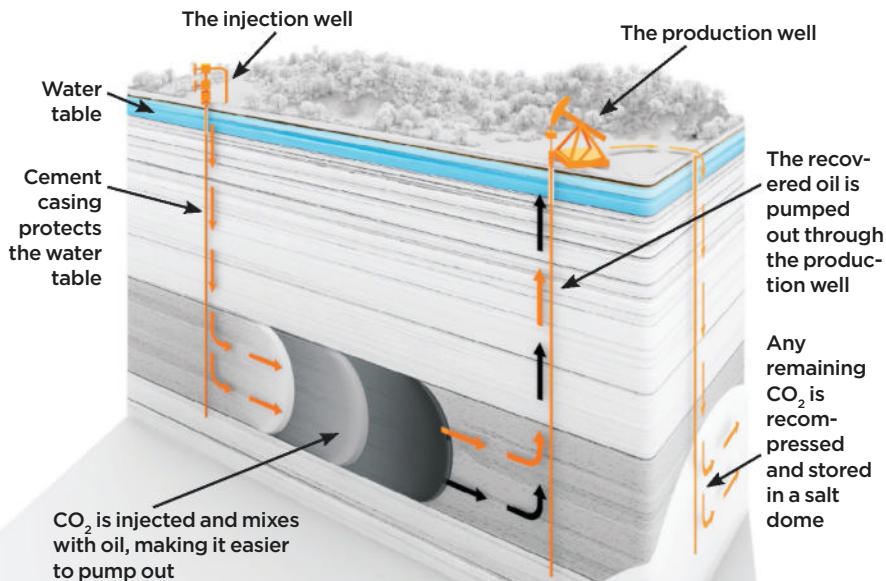
As the oilmen explained it, primary production had drawn about 80 percent of the oil out of the field. But the remaining 20 percent was still lying below, and they believed they could recover it. I had read most of the literature about the negative effects of fracking: how it could contaminate groundwater, contribute to air pollution, create wastewater issues, and, according to some anecdotes, even cause tap water to become flammable.

But I had also noticed what fracking had done for the economy. For example, by tapping previously locked natural gas, it had enabled gas prices—and home heating and electric bills—to remain low for several years. I watched as Salem, Massachusetts, replaced its old coal-fired power plant with a new gas-fired one, thanks to fracking. But did I really think that my well was going to help usher in energy independence—or just more environmental problems?

I needed to do more sleuthing. I

2. CO₂ FLOODING

When CO₂ is combined with oil that has been trapped underground, it lowers the viscosity of the oil so that it is able to flow into the production well.



clicked on Google Earth to locate the Webster tract. It consisted of about a dozen wells just north of the town of Webster, an aerospace hub of 10,500 people 20 miles southeast of Houston.

I went online to do research and discovered that Texas has a 100-year history of derricks and drill rigs coexisting beside homes and farms. Cities like Fort Worth, Dallas, and Houston boomed because of the black gold sitting in subterranean vaults. As a result, I thought I might find unconditional support for oil and gas extraction, but instead I found that Texas is having many of the same debates as the rest of the country.

A North Texas family was awarded \$3 million last year in a landmark suit against a company whose fracking operations, they argued, had made them sick and killed some of their ranch animals. In November, Denton, north of Dallas, became the first city in Texas to ban fracking altogether, although legal challenges remain.

Other articles gave me important historical context. What we know today as fracking began in 1981 when Mitchell Energy was the first to drill horizontally to reach the Barnett shale formation beneath Fort Worth. It used a “slick-water frack”—which involves adding chemicals to well water to

allow it to flow at a higher rate—and dramatically increased the amount of retrievable natural gas.

In the late 1990s, these technologies, coupled with other innovations, helped trigger a nationwide fracking boom. Today, the Newark East Field underlying the Barnett forma-

tion continues to be the largest producer in Texas, accounting for 30 percent of all the natural gas extracted in the state. Because it is so big and was the first field to be exploited, the early frackers made mistakes and garnered their share of critics.

Newer players do not want to repeat that history. I found an online

forum for land and royalty owners above the Haynesville shale formation, which covers 9,000 square miles in East Texas, northwestern Louisiana, and southwestern Arkansas. The website demonstrates a determination to get things right. Its introduction reads, “As exciting as this shale is, we know that we have a responsibility to do this thing correctly.”

Then I called the owners of the Webster tract: Denbury Resources in Plano, Texas. I asked Jack Collins, head of owner relations, when the company planned to start fracking my well. He replied, by e-mail, “We have no plans to frack Webster field, but we



The early frackers made mistakes and garnered critics—newer players do not want to repeat that history.

do plan to commence a CO₂ flood of the field next year.”

With fracking, fluids are forced into a wellhead to break up the shale and free the oil or natural gas. With CO₂ flooding, carbon dioxide is pumped into a well and adheres to the droplets of oil in the shale. It's a little like mixing turpentine with paint: The oil droplets swell and become thinner so they can be pumped out. (CO₂ is also used to boost natural gas extraction, but this practice is less frequent.)

In 2015, Denbury plans to pump human-made CO₂ emissions—via pipeline from a new power plant being built in Mississippi—into the Webster field. After the oil is extracted from Webster, the company intends to leave the remaining carbon dioxide underground, where it cannot contribute to global warming. The federal government will provide the plant with a grant to participate in the project.

I wondered: Had I become an investor in an energy company that is doing carbon sequestration and oil extraction right? I decided to go to Texas to find out more.

TALKING WITH THE NEIGHBORS

I found the Webster tract sitting on both sides of the Gulf Freeway, not far from the Johnson Space Center. There are large expanses of hardwood forests and the remains of old fruit orchards. Horses and dairy cows

graze beside the capped wells of the oil field. Across the highway, towering rigs are starting to drill.

I spoke to several neighbors to learn what they thought of the project. I talked to a carpenter who said he was concerned about reports of earthquakes in West Texas, echoing a common concern about both fracking and CO₂ flooding. “Of course there is no way in heaven you can say they were caused by fracking,” said the man. “But there have never been any earthquakes there before.”

I asked another local resident, Weezie McKay, what she would do if a company wanted to recover oil or gas under her house. “I would start to look for a new home,” she said without hesitating. However, Eric Miller, a chemical engineer in Orange, said he would be thrilled if someone wanted to use carbon dioxide to get more oil out of his well. “This kind of thing has been done safely for years,” he said.

I was discovering that there are many ways of looking at oil. Easterners tend to look at it as a messy business of booming gushers. But the average well isn't a gusher; it's one more like mine that can produce a moderate amount of oil for several decades or more if the correct technology is used. Scientists see oil as a mineral that built up when our planet was much warmer and plankton was removing heat-trapped CO₂ from the ocean, then sequestering it under sediment, where it gradually cooked

into oil and natural gas. In essence, oil is our planet's way of cooling itself down. The problem is that now we are putting that carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere so fast that the system can't absorb it without contributing to global warming.

Many thoughtful environmentalists look at oil and gas differently. They see running out of oil as one of our biggest environmental problems. Despite its reputation, oil is one of the cleanest fuels we have—far cleaner than coal or tar sands. In their view, we should convert to wind and solar energy while conserving what oil is left for essential things like transportation.

Finally, most Texans still see oil as a decent investment that can earn an income for several generations while helping to build our nation's economy.

MY VERDICT

I like to think that using CO₂ to extract oil takes all the considerations into account, and my well is owned by a company that is a leader in the field of carbon dioxide sequestration and oil extraction.

Do I think this technology is the silver bullet that will solve all our global warming problems? No.

Do I think there are no problems associated with carbon injection? No.

In 2011, Denbury paid a \$662,500 fine after its injection system blew the cement casing out of a well in Mississippi and carbon dioxide escaped, asphyxiating several deer and other smaller animals. Critics remain concerned about whether companies do enough to safely cap the wells so they can withstand the pressure that forces the oil out. But even wind turbines have been blamed for killing wildlife. Like wind and solar power, carbon sequestering is not the complete answer, but it seems to me to be a step in the right direction.



**In theory,
my field will
make modest
profits
extracting oil
without the
problems of
fracking.**

In theory, my field will make a modest profit extracting oil out of the ground without most of the problems associated with fracking. It will sequester four percent more heat-trapping carbon underground than will be emitted by the pumped-out oil, the equivalent of taking several hundred thousand cars off the road.

So I have decided to hang on to my well to see what happens when it is pumped full of carbon dioxide. I'm hopeful it will help create a world in which CO₂ emissions are declining. If so, I may pass on the well to my grandchildren, as my father did to me. **R**

Laugh Lines

SUMMER JOBS

Big Lemonade continues its annual summer job shocker. This year, some seasonal employees are clearly under six and also pushing stolen cookies.

🐦 @MERRILLMARKOE

Being a lifeguard is a weird summer job for a kid. Ninety-nine percent of the time, sit and do nothing. One percent of the time, SAVE SOMEONE'S LIFE.

🐦 JAKE WEISMAN (@WEISMANJAKE)

Try an internship! Internships give you all the experience of a summer job without the hassle of a paycheck.

STEPHEN COLBERT

L.A. public pools don't have lifeguards—[they] have life coaches. If they see you struggling in the water, they say, "Are you happy with the decisions you're making?" and give you a pamphlet for a yoga studio.

CRAIG FERGUSON



I got my first full-time job, but I could have sworn I was making more money in college, working for my parents as their daughter.

MELANIE RENO

This summer, I'm going to go to the beach and bury metal objects that say *Get a life* on them.

DEMETRI MARTIN

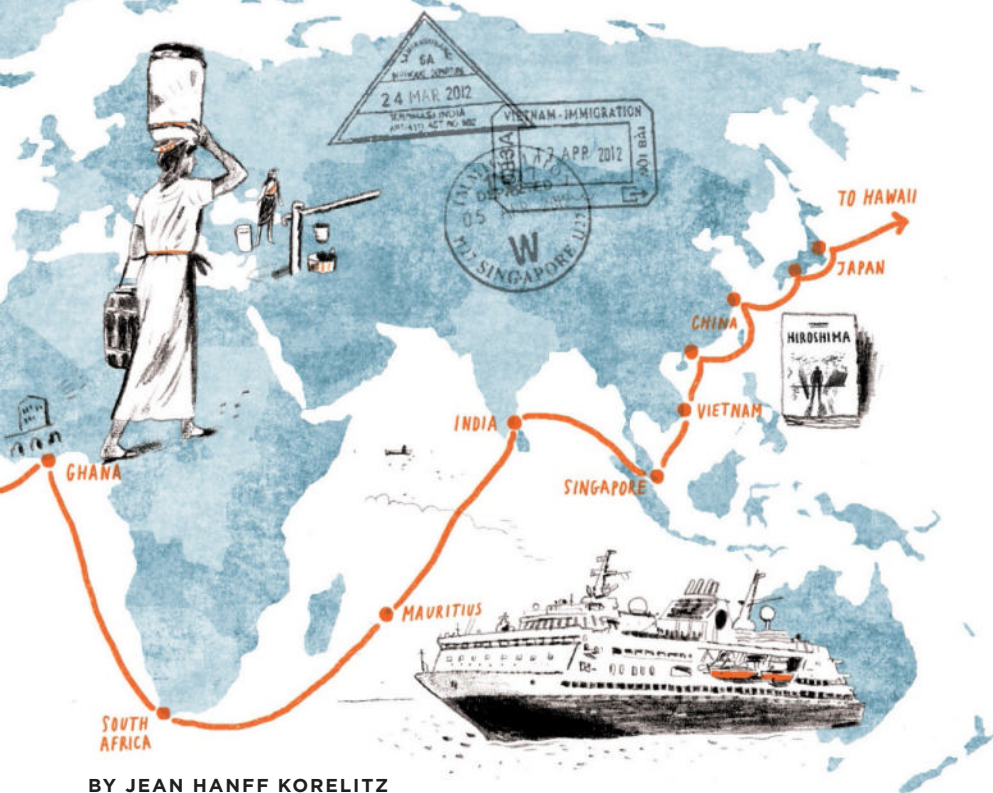
FROM JAPAN
HAWAII

*The author with
her husband and
son at Ta Prohm,
in Cambodia, in
April 2012*



100 DAYS AT SEA

Far from a pleasure cruise, our round-the-globe trip was a profound voyage of discovery



BY JEAN HANFF KORELITZ

WHAT KIND OF RIGHT-THINKING PERSON takes off in the middle of her life to travel around the globe on a refitted cruise ship with 750 college students? That would be me, or, more accurately, me along with my 12-year-old son, Asher, and my husband, Paul. A poet, Paul had been hired to teach for Semester at Sea, a program that takes college students and instructors on ocean voyages.

I'll admit that I went reluctantly. I did not want to take my son out of seventh grade, nor did I want to be an ocean away from my parents (both in their 80s) and my college-aged daughter. But long ago, a more intrepid teenage version of me had gone to Maine

on an Outward Bound course, where I spent weeks rowing through frigid waters and soloing on uninhabited islands. Now the overarching lesson of that experience came back to me: Ships may be safe inside the harbor, but that is not what ships are for. So

when, in the course of a person's generally settled life, she is offered the opportunity to voyage around the world with her husband and child, her only possible response is: yes.

On the appointed day, we boarded our ship in Fort Lauderdale with a handful of exotic visas and an armful of exotic inoculations, bound for San Diego the long way around. Our stops would include Dominica, Brazil, Ghana, South Africa, Mauritius, India, Singapore, Vietnam, China, and Japan. While Paul taught, I would work on a novel and bully Asher through a reading list of books I'd paired with our ports (*Lord of the Flies* in Dominica, *Cry, the Beloved Country* in South Africa, *Hiroshima* in Japan). I hired a student to tutor him in math, and he audited college classes in chemistry, anthropology, and film. My husband and I would share a tiny cabin, with our son in an even tinier one across the corridor.

"This is not a cruise; this is a voyage of discovery" is Semester at Sea's unofficial motto, and that statement, although hokey, was true. The students embarked as cheerful American kids, open-minded and up for adventure, even as the faculty tried to prepare them for the cultures they'd encounter. "You consume ten times as many

resources as the average citizen in most of the countries we'll be visiting," one professor said. "You may not be aware of the disparity. But they are."

By the time we left Africa, most of the kids were reeling. At a debriefing after leaving Ghana, students described a level of disorientation so

profound that I couldn't help thinking, This is what it sounds like when hundreds of minds are blown simultaneously.

One group, who visited a village in the northern part of the country, told us how the women walked miles to fetch water because the well was broken. The amount needed to fix it turned out to be pocket

change—literally, the students covered the needed repairs with what they had in their pockets. "So I didn't buy a souvenir," one young woman said when she described how the village elders had embraced her in gratitude. Another student, the first in her family to attend college, had always thought of herself as poor. "Now I don't know what I am," she said.

I'd had my own disorienting experience in the backseat of a taxi in Accra, Ghana's capital. Frantically looking back and forth between the map in my hands and the streets flying by outside, I saw that the two versions of the city had almost nothing to do

“
*I had a feeling of
being completely
untethered from
the familiar,
propelled into
a place that was
not logical.*

with each other and that my legendary (within my family) map skills were useless. I had no idea where I was. I felt completely untethered from the familiar, propelled into a place that was not logical. It was a profoundly uncomfortable sensation, but I thought, If you're not willing to give up some small measure of control, you might as well not go anywhere.

And so, I surrendered. During my 100 days, I subdued—OK, with pharmaceutical help—my arachnophobia long enough to board a riverboat traveling up the Amazon, where I spent two nights sleeping in a hammock and listening to the rain forest. I toured the mesmerizing and appalling slave castles on Ghana's coast; camped in the tea plantations of Munnar, India; and hiked on a remote, unrestored section of the Great Wall of China. In South Africa, I listened to a former prisoner describe his life at Robben Island with Nelson Mandela; in Cambodia, I heard a guide report witnessing the death of his eight-year-old sister as his family tried to escape the Khmer Rouge.

I watched the sun set over Cape Town and rise over Angkor Wat. I ate manioc, fufu, Peking duck, dosa, and shabu-shabu. In Singapore, I

consumed the single most surreal dish of the voyage: a sparerib, basted in chocolate, covered with whipped cream, and topped with a cherry.

As we neared San Diego, one professor told me that he had never felt "more present" than he had on our voyage. I had to agree, although in one sense, I was significantly less present than when I'd embarked. I'd lost 15 pounds, the result of persistent low-grade seasickness and the ship's execrable food (although credit must also go to an intestinal bug I picked up in Africa).

And while I may not have recovered the bravery of my younger, Outward Bound self, I was amazed by what I had done. I'd circumnavigated the globe with my son and husband and returned home, full of sights and experiences from places I'd never thought I'd visit. (And the three of us were still on speaking terms!)

Sometimes we are outward bound for reasons that aren't particularly courageous, but bravery isn't the only attribute worth having. Saying yes to an adventure, for whatever reason, brings its own rewards, and it's never too late to relearn something I'd managed to forget: Ships may be safe inside the harbor, but that is not what ships are for. **R**



BAD NEWS ...

Insanity is hereditary. You can get it from your children.

SAM LEVENSON

Source: *Oxford Dictionary of Humorous Quotations* by Gyles Brandreth (Oxford University Press)



PHOTO

OF LASTING
INTEREST



**Photograph by
Slava Veder**

**Chosen by
Cathy Trost,**

*senior vice president
for exhibits and programs
at the Newseum*

"I have a copy of this photo in my office, and it lifts me up each time I see it. An American prisoner of war is released from captivity in Vietnam in 1973. His family members have waited nearly six years without knowing if they will ever see him again, and they are literally lifted off their feet with excitement at this moment of reunion.

"The photo symbolizes hope and healing near the end of a bitter war, but for me, it's all about the love of family."

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A sudden stroke, despair, and then a brilliant idea

THE STORY OF HENRY & JANE

BY BRIAN EULE
FROM STANFORD
MAGAZINE

ATOP LONG AND WINDING Page Mill Road in Northern California, where the miles turn over without fanfare, a driveway stretches, removed from Silicon Valley below. At its end, a house, and inside, Henry Evans lies in bed. It's where he spends between 18 and 24 hours of each day. Occasionally, he is taken to the bathroom or put in a wheelchair. A few times each week, he is placed outside by the garden. Most of the time, though, he is here, head propped up, the rest of his body motionless beneath the covers.

It's been like this for more than a dozen years. Though Henry can turn his head and has limited use of one finger on his left hand, the rest of his body is paralyzed. And though he can let out a deep laugh and cry, he cannot speak. But Henry can feel everything—every itch he cannot scratch, every pain he cannot ease, and every pressure he cannot relieve.

Then there are his eyes. They smile and roll when he teases. They narrow and focus, connecting the distant world with the bright mind still fully functioning inside his head.

There are a few ways in which Henry speaks. A wink of his left eye is a request to scratch an itch. Blinking twice means “thank you.” Rolling his eyes toward the ceiling means Henry is requesting the letter board, a translucent plastic rectangle with sets of letters in various places: ABC in the top left; DEF in the top middle; GHI in the top right, and so forth. As Henry's wife, Jane, holds up the board, she follows his eyes and calls out the letters he focuses on, spelling words as he goes. Often, she finishes them for him.

“I, P, O—I posted—A, N—and—T, W—two people ...,” Henry begins telling me through Jane one evening, describing a note he posted to a

website. With Jane's help, Henry's words come fast. Then Jane puts the board down and leans in, and Henry moves his eyes to where the letters would be. Jane, too, has the board memorized and reads as they go, spelling out his sentences.

Henry's story is as much about Jane as it is about him. “We are one person,” Henry jokes. “We just can't decide if we are a boy or a girl.”

“JANE AND I ARE ONE PERSON,”
HENRY
JOKES. “WE JUST CAN'T DECIDE IF WE ARE A BOY OR A GIRL.”

Jane radiates warmth and positivity. She's quick to laugh, and Henry says she has greatly prolonged his life. The two grew close in high school and were married in their early 20s. “It was like magic,” Jane says of their first dance. “I felt like I was home.” Although she's more than a foot shorter than Henry, Jane man-

ages to lift him out of bed and into a wheelchair. She adjusts him to ease pressure and feeds him. Sometimes, when they long for an embrace, she maneuvers his arms to wrap around her, squeezes him, and feels the pressure of him leaning in.

IN 2002, Henry's life was full. He was physically fit and a towering presence. The chief financial officer at a start-up, he and Jane had four young children. Eight months earlier, they had bought their first house, on



Henry spells words by directing his gaze to clusters of letters on a board.

a beautiful piece of land in Los Altos Hills. Henry, good with his hands, looked forward to renovating it. He was 40, and life was just beginning.

One August morning, Henry was driving his children to school on the way to work when his vision narrowed, and his speech began to slur. He focused on the road and dropped his children off, and then he turned around. Six miles back up the hill, Henry stumbled into the house. He told Jane that he just wanted to lie down. She said they were going to the doctor. Henry had to crawl to get back to the car.

In the emergency room, Henry's right arm went limp. "I'm so scared,"

he told Jane. And then he fell into a coma.

Doctors initially thought Henry might have meningitis. It turned out that a birth defect had precipitated the stroke-like symptoms. He was put on life support, and when he emerged from the coma two weeks later, he was unable to speak or move. Jane noticed he tracked her with his eyes.

"I soon realized they were all I could move," Henry writes. "My dad explained that I had no motor control, and I got it—I was trapped in my own body."

At first, Henry was unable to breathe on his own. He had a tracheostomy and a feeding tube, and he

was on about 25 medications. Two blinks became “yes,” and one, “no.” He was barely alive, but his mind and his senses were perfectly intact.

FOUR MONTHS LATER, Jane and Henry returned home. Though Henry had developed use of a finger and better control of his neck, he had a hard time thinking about living. For the next three years, Henry talked to Jane about helping him with suicide.

“There is a reason God left you with your mind, and you have life,” Jane told him. “Those are two incredible gifts that we take for granted every day. The hardest thing you have to do is figure out why you’re left here on Earth. You have a purpose.”

A few years later, a television show helped change Henry’s outlook on life. One day, while watching CNN, he saw an interview with Georgia Tech professor Charlie Kemp. Kemp was discussing his collaboration with Willow Garage, a now defunct robotics research lab in Menlo Park, California, and its robot, the PR2. Henry immediately recognized the potential of robots to level the playing field for severely disabled individuals.

Like Henry, many people are dependent on caregivers for their “activities of daily living,” as they are called: eating, showering, moving around, shaving, even scratching an itch. But robots have the potential to help by serving as extensions or surrogates for body parts.

Living with quadriplegia had given Henry a grasp of what ideas would be beneficial in practice. Using a head tracker that converts tiny head movements into cursor movements, Henry fired off e-mails to Steve Cousins, then president and CEO of Willow Garage, and to Kemp. Longer e-mail discussions and, eventually, a collaboration ensued between Henry and Jane, Willow Garage, and the Healthcare Robotics Lab at Georgia Tech that led to the use of robots that function as body parts for the severely disabled. Henry called it Robots for Humanity, describing his work on the company’s website as “using technology to extend our capabilities, fill in our weaknesses, and let people perform at their best.”

One of the first things Kemp and Cousins did with Henry and Jane was ask them to identify tasks that would be the most helpful for a robot to perform. Scratching and shaving ranked high on their list. First, Kemp and Cousins designed a program that allowed Henry to use his head tracker and a computer to manipulate the PR2 to scratch an itch on his face. It was the first time he had been able to do so in ten years. Shaving, they felt, would take a little more practice.

Thanks to software developed primarily by Kemp, Henry could operate the robot remotely on his own computer. When it came time to test the technology for shaving, Kemp agreed to be the guinea pig in a practice run.

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One day in his lab at Georgia Tech, Kemp sat very still as a robot controlled by Henry in California moved closer to Kemp's stubble-covered face. The robot held an electric razor. Tight in the professor's hand, a small control with a red kill-switch button. The trial was a success. Later that day, a clean-shaven Kemp sent out an e-mail to their collaborators.

"I suspect that a mobile manipulator controlled from across the country by a person with quadriplegia to help someone shave is a first for robotics," Kemp wrote.

The implication of the trial was significant. It provided further evidence that people with motor impairments could operate robots to perform physical labor from remote sites, perhaps for compensation. Kemp envisioned people with impairments also helping one another remotely.

Not long after his practice run with Kemp, Henry shaved his own face.

ON NOVEMBER 20, 2013, nearly 3,000 miles away from Henry's Los Altos Hills home, a capacity crowd fills Sidney Harman Hall in Washington, DC, and applauds as Henry is introduced to talk about this new technology. A robot rolls onto the

stage. A monitor on top shows Henry, back in California. The audience grows quiet.

A speaking device reads what Henry types, and he controls a robot from the other side of the country with his head tracker. Henry "speaks"—both on stage and at home beside Jane—and demonstrates how he can fly a drone remotely, in front of his listeners.

"From a distance, all humans are disabled," Henry tells his audience. "As humans, we adapted to our environment through evolution. We developed sight and hearing and speech. Yet these adaptations are quite limited. We can't run faster than about 25 miles per hour. We can't fly. We can't stay underwater forever. All humans are limited by nature in many ways.

"I may have lost a few of the natural adaptations that evolution afforded me, but I have adapted, often in a way similar to how you have adapted to nature's limitations."

The next time you see a disabled person, Henry tells the crowd, remind yourself that you use assistive devices at least as often as he or she does. But that doesn't diminish you. "Your disability doesn't make you any less of a person, and neither does mine," he says. He gets a standing ovation. **R**

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I Owe It All to Community College

BY TOM HANKS

FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

IN 1974, I GRADUATED from Skyline High School in Oakland, California, an underachieving student with lousy SAT scores. Allowed to send my results to three colleges, I chose MIT and Villanova, knowing such fine schools would never accept a student like me but hoping they'd toss some car stickers my way. I couldn't afford tuition for college anyway. I sent my final set of stats to Chabot, a community college in nearby Hayward, California, which, because it accepted everyone and was free, would be my alma mater.

For thousands of commuting students, Chabot was our Columbia, Annapolis, even our Sorbonne, offering courses in physics, stenography, auto mechanics, certified public accounting, foreign languages, journalism—name the art or science, the subject or trade, and it was probably in the catalog. The college had a nursing program that churned out graduates, sports teams that funneled athletes to big-time programs, and parking for a

few thousand cars—all free but for the effort and the cost of used textbooks.

Classmates included veterans back from Vietnam, women of every marital and maternal status returning to school, middle-aged men wanting to improve their employment prospects and paychecks. We could get our general education requirements out of the way at Chabot—credits we could transfer to a university—which made those two years an invaluable head start.



I was able to go on to the California State University in Sacramento (at \$95 a semester, just barely affordable) and study no other subject but my major, theater arts. (After a year there, I moved on, enrolling in a little thing called the School of Hard Knocks, aka Life.)

By some fluke of the punch-card computer era, I made Chabot's dean's list taking classes I loved (oral interpretation), classes I loathed (health, a requirement), classes I aced (film

as art—like Jean Renoir's *The Golden Coach* and Luis Buñuel's *Simon of the Desert*), and classes I dropped after the first hour (astronomy, because it was all math). I nearly failed zoology, killing my fruit flies by neglect, but got lucky in an English course, "the College Reading Experience." The books of Carlos Castaneda were incomprehensible to me (and still are), but my assigned presentation on the analytic process called structural

dynamics was hailed as clear and concise, though I did nothing more than embellish the definition I had looked up in the dictionary.

A public-speaking class was unforgettable for a couple of reasons. First, the assignments forced us to get over our self-consciousness. Second, another student was a stewardess, as



For thousands of students, Chabot was our Columbia, Annapolis, even our Sorbonne.

flight attendants called themselves in the '70s. She was studying communications and was gorgeous. She lived not far from me, and when my VW threw a rod and was in the shop for a week, she offered me a lift to class. I rode shotgun that Monday-Wednesday-Friday, totally tongue-tied. Communicating with her one-on-one was the antithesis of public speaking.

Classes I took at Chabot have rippled through my professional pond. I produced the HBO miniseries *John Adams* with an outline format I learned from a pipe-smoking historian, James Coovelis, whose lectures were riveting. Mary Lou Fitzgerald's "Studies in Shakespeare" taught me how the five-act structures of *Richard III*, *The Tempest*, and *Othello* focused their themes.

In Herb Kennedy's "Drama in Performance," I read plays like *The Hot*

L Baltimore and *Desire Under the Elms*, then saw their productions. I got to see the plays he taught, through student rush tickets at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco and the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Those plays filled my head with expanded dreams. I got an A. Of course, I goofed off between

classes eating french fries and looking at girls; such are the pleasures, too, of schools that cost thousands of bucks a semester. Some hours I idled away in the huge library that anchored Chabot's oval

quad. It's where I first read the *New York Times*, frustrated by its lack of comics.

If Chabot's library still has its collection of vinyl records, you will find my name repeatedly on the takeout slip of Jason Robards's performance of the monologues of Eugene O'Neill. On Side B, he was Hickey from *The Iceman Cometh*, a recording I listened to 20 times at least. When I worked with Mr. Robards on the 1993 film *Philadelphia*, he confessed to recording those monologues at 10 in the morning after lots and lots of coffee.

Chabot College is still in Hayward, though Mr. Coovelis, Ms. Fitzgerald, and Mr. Kennedy are no longer there. I drove past the campus a few years ago with one of my kids and summed up my two years there this way: "That place made me what I am today." **R**

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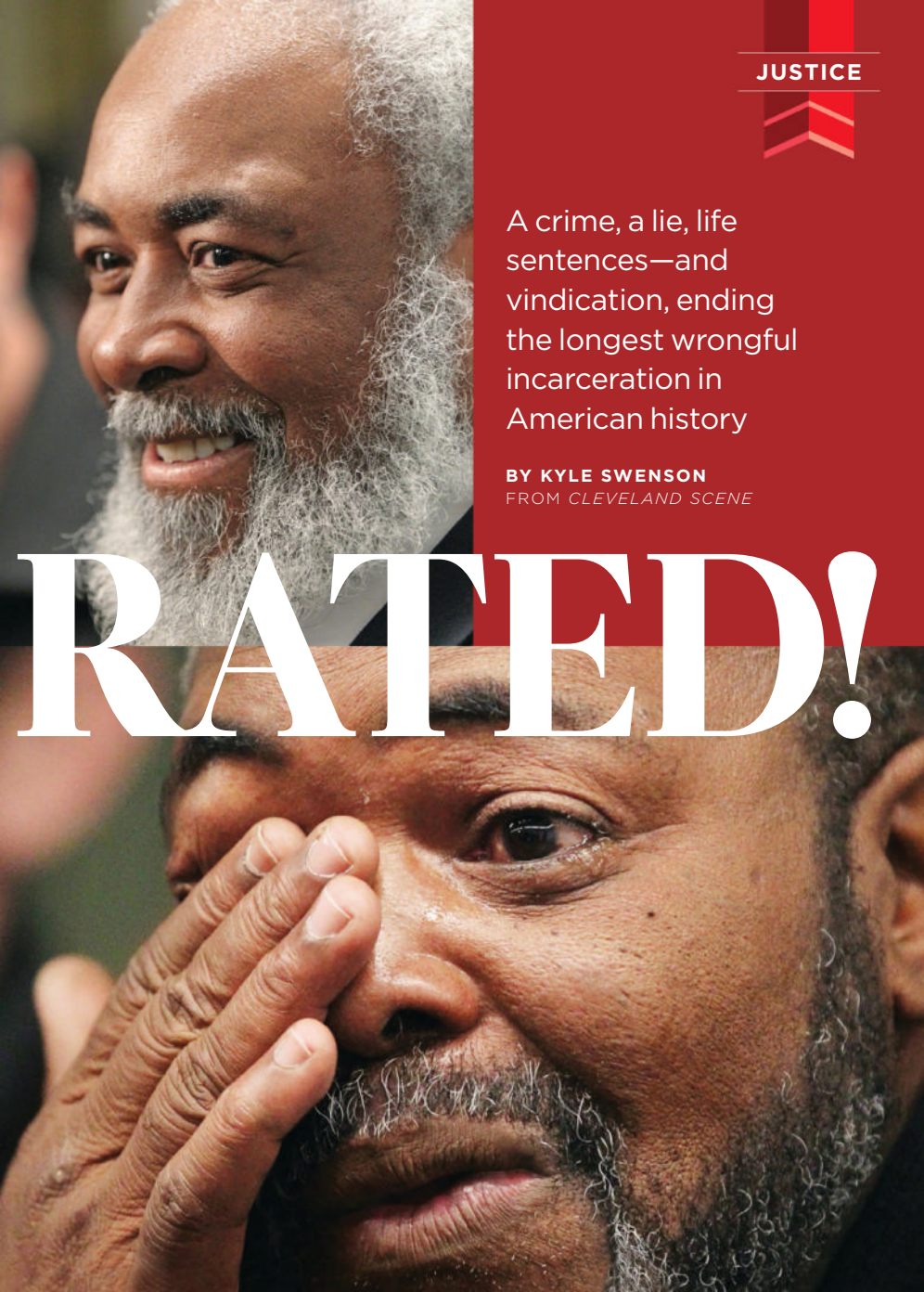
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(Clockwise from top left) The crime scene; and after their release, Wiley Bridgeman, Ronnie Bridgeman, and Ricky Jackson, who served the most time

EXONE



JUSTICE

A crime, a lie, life sentences—and vindication, ending the longest wrongful incarceration in American history

BY KYLE SWENSON
FROM *CLEVELAND SCENE*

RATED!

BEFORE THEY THREW HIM IN CHAINS, he was a gutsy kid with wandering feet.

The Cleveland Museum of Art was a favorite. He'd go alone, even though he was only six. Entry was free, and Ricky Jackson's shoes would squeak down the marble hallways hung with Dutch masters and Monets. He always stopped in the Armor Court to look at the polished knights; here was a world as strange as the places on *Star Trek*, the show his stepfather watched on TV.

He kicked around the streets too. He'd jump on the bus and go as far as his change took him. His family—mom, stepdad, two brothers, and a sister—moved as well, from house to house, and eventually they ended up on Arthur Avenue. One house down was a family with a son around Ricky's age. Ronnie was a kid so tiny that everyone called him Bitzie, as in itsy-bitsy. Bitzie's older brother, Wiley, was known as Buddy. As teens, the trio became inseparable, playing chess and tooling around in Buddy's Sebring.

By the mid-1970s, Ricky was punching in regularly at a restaurant. Bitzie was doing shifts as a porter, and he'd completed training in welding. Wiley was in the National Guard and working at a clothing store. They were good kids easing into that age when they were starting to figure it all out.

That life came to a close in the fall of 1975, when Ricky Jackson along with Bitzie and Buddy—Ronnie and Wiley Bridgeman—were sentenced to death. A white salesman had been robbed at a corner store, shot, and killed. The

police said Ronnie and Ricky beat the man before Ricky pulled the trigger and Wiley drove them away. No physical evidence linked them to the crime, but a witness, 12-year-old Edward Vernon, told police he'd seen it all.

Ricky, Ronnie, and Wiley were 18, 17, and 20 years old, respectively. They were innocent—but it would take nearly 40 years to prove it.

The Chance Encounter

IN NOVEMBER 2001, the past hit Edward Vernon like a falling anvil. He was at the desk at the City Mission, checking the IDs of the homeless men shuffling in. He overheard a stranger explaining he'd just paroled out after 25 years for a 1975 murder he didn't commit. When the man showed his ID, Vernon stared at the name: Wiley Bridgeman.

By 2001, Vernon's life was straightening out. His adult years had been clouded by cocaine and marijuana; he did jail time after a drug bust. But that was behind him. Now here was Wiley, one of the three he'd sent to prison,

PREVIOUS SPREAD, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY CLEVELAND SCENE. JOHN KUNTZ/THE PLAIN DEALER/LANDOV MEDIA (2). PHIL LONG/AP PHOTO

in front of him a quarter century later.

The next day, Vernon approached Wiley in a group therapy session, blubbering. The men talked. Wiley told Vernon they should go to a TV station with the truth. Vernon wasn't so sure. He kept his distance, and Wiley moved into an apartment. After an argument with his parole officer in 2002, Wiley went back to prison. As far as Vernon was concerned, the door had swung shut on the past again.

A Changed Man

HOME WAS THE last place Ronnie Bridgeman wanted to go when he paroled out in 2003. (Because he was identified as the shooter, Ricky had difficulty getting parole.) "Cleveland was no longer my town," Ronnie said recently. "It represented everything that was ugly and hurtful. It had nothing to do with the people I knew per se, but it was the people who were supposed to protect and serve. They ruined it for me."

Inside, he'd converted to Islam and changed his name to Kwame Ajamu. "I decided Ronnie Bridgeman should be left there in prison," he says. Returning home made that hard. "Every day of my life, it seemed like I would run into someone from my past, someone who knew Ronnie Bridgeman but who didn't know Kwame Ajamu."

He put together a life. He married a woman named LaShawn in 2004; he found work at the County Board of

Elections. Things were good, but the past kept tugging at him. "For a long time, I just felt like I had abandoned those guys because they had let me out," Kwame said. "It was killing me, man. That motivated me every day."

He called people from the old neighborhood, asking if they remembered anything about the 1975 incident, and contacted lawyers about mounting a challenge to the convictions. Lawyers, however, cost money, which Kwame didn't have. I was a writer at *Cleveland Scene*, the city's alternative newsweekly, when a lawyer told me about Kwame. I went to meet him one day at a coffee shop. He was sitting with thousands of pages of court documents in a neat stack.

I expected anger from someone who'd been wrongly put away, but Kwame had learned to metabolize the injustice. He was remarkably empathic, even about Edward Vernon. "He was just a kid then," he said.

As Kwame explained it, the testimony that led to their convictions went as follows: On May 19, 1975, Vernon claimed he'd left school early and boarded a city bus home. When he arrived, he saw Ricky and Ronnie struggling with Harold Franks outside the Fairmount Cut-Rate store. They splashed the man with acid and beat him before Ricky shot him twice. The two sped off in a green car, which Vernon said he'd seen Wiley driving earlier.

All lies, Kwame said. On the day of the crime, he and Ricky played

basketball in a park in the morning before heading to the Bridgeman house. Kwame and Ricky spent the afternoon at the chessboard until they heard there was trouble at the corner store. Wiley was washing his car outside. The boys went to see what was going on.

I did six months of reporting, which backed up Kwame's account. I found witnesses who said they were with Vernon when he was supposedly witnessing the crime. Others remembered being with the Bridgemans and Ricky at the time they were allegedly robbing the store and murdering Franks. None of them was approached by the police during the investigation nor had any of them come forward with their information.

My reporting showed that the men's convictions were based on Vernon's improbable, inconsistent testimony. Vernon, however, did not want to talk. "As far as I'm concerned, it's a done deal," he said in 2011 after I finally tracked him down.

Months of work built up to June 8, 2011, the day of my story's publication. Then, nothing. Ricky and Wiley were still inside. "It actually crushed me," Kwame said.

A Reckoning

CLEVELAND'S EMMANUEL Christian Center is one of the steady pulses of life in an area of gutted blocks. Vernon has bowed his head there on Sundays for the past six years. Pastor

Anthony Singleton, a lanky, dapper man of God, likes to park himself in the lives of his 200 or so parishioners. As soon as Vernon began attending, Singleton struck up a relationship. Drink, smoke, and vulgarity never passed Vernon's lips, and he knew his Scriptures and ministered to the sick. Still, "there was always this black cloud over him," Singleton said.

Bad luck dogged the man. "In a two-year period, he lost, like, two cars and three jobs," the pastor said. "I'm just saying to myself, 'This is not making any sense.'" Then there was the crying. Vernon often burst into tears at services. During the year, Singleton held shut-ins for the congregation's men, all-nighters of spiritual searching, where Vernon wept dusk to dawn.

One day Singleton answered the phone in his office. I was asking to speak to Vernon. Singleton said he'd relay my message, and he was curious about why I was calling. He asked Vernon and got the brush-off.

After my story appeared, Singleton read it. When he tried to nudge Vernon into talking, Vernon refused. Singleton knew he couldn't push it with his parishioner. But he also couldn't leave it alone.

In early 2013, Vernon was hit with skyrocketing blood pressure that put him in the hospital. During the same period, an attorney from the Ohio Innocence Project called Singleton, asking to speak with Vernon about the 1975 case. One Sunday after church,

Singleton trekked to the hospital and found Vernon alone. "I have something to talk to you about," the pastor said. "I've been praying about it and watching you." He explained to Vernon that he'd read my *Cleveland Scene* story. "I want to know if you're ready to talk about it."

Vernon was out of the bed like someone had cracked a starter's pistol. Arms wrapped around Singleton, he wept. The words tumbled out. Vernon confessed to Singleton. And in April 2013, in a sworn affidavit taken by the Ohio Innocence Project, he admitted he'd not only lied about witnessing the murder, but he also claimed he had been forced to do so by the police.

Vernon told the lawyers that he'd gone home on May 19, 1975, on his school bus, not earlier as he'd testified. While the bus was pulling up to his stop, Vernon heard gunshots ringing from the Cut-Rate. By the time he rushed over, Franks was gasping his last breaths. He and a friend, Tommy Hall, walked home. Hall told Vernon he knew who did it: "Ricky, Bitzie, and Buddy."

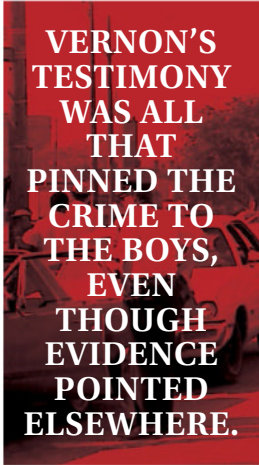
Vernon returned to the scene later, and when an officer asked if anyone had information, Vernon

offered the boys' names. "I don't exactly know why I went up to the police at first," he said later. "I think I just wanted to be helpful. You have to understand I was 12 years old at the time. I thought I was doing the right thing."

According to Vernon, when detectives spoke with him in the days after the murder, they gave him details gleaned from other witnesses—the number of assailants, the weapons used, the make and model of the car. After police arrested Ronnie, Wiley, and Ricky, Vernon went to the station to look at a lineup.

He failed to make an ID, and a detective took him into a back room. "He got really loud and angry and started yelling at me and called me a liar," Vernon stated in his affidavit. "He was slamming his hands on the table and pushing things around, calling me this and that. I was frightened and crying. The detective said that I was too young to go to jail but that he would arrest my parents for perjury because I was backing out. My mom was sick at that time, and that really scared me."

The police wrote a statement, which Vernon signed. After the first trial, he was given a copy of his testimony to study for subsequent hearings. This



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testimony was all that pinned the murder to Ronnie, Wiley, and Ricky. What's troubling is how much other evidence pointed elsewhere.

The day after the murder, the FBI contacted Cleveland detectives with names from an informant. The list included brothers Arthur and Willie King, who had been tied to earlier stickups. The police also traced a green car matching the description of the getaway vehicle to 23-year-old Ishmael Hixon. A woman from the neighborhood told police she believed her 16-year-old son, Paul Gardenshire, was involved. Witnesses didn't come through with an ID. But in June 1975, after the arrests, another resident fingered Gardenshire. He claimed that the teen had a .38, the caliber of gun used in the murder, and drove a green car, but he was never charged.

Life Inside

MAD DOESN'T BEGIN to touch it, nor does *angry*. *Despair* doesn't suffice. Use as many synonyms as you want, but words can't cage the feeling: One moment, you're a young man, life stretching ahead. Then you're in a cell. For no reason. When Jackson and the Bridgemans went to prison, each coped in his own way.

Wiley poured himself into his legal case. He won a retrial in 1977 but was again given the same sentence. At one point, he was 20 days away from execution before his sentence was

commuted to life in prison. His mental state deteriorated until he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. In a way, Wiley's breakdown helped save his brother. Ronnie focused on his older sibling, worrying about his state and keeping it together for him.

As for Ricky, "I dealt with it badly," he said. "I was acting out, showing aggression, having this I-don't-care attitude." He was racked with anxiety, his blood pressure geysered high, and a pain chewed at his stomach. It went on for years. What turned him around was the company he was keeping. He saw lifers who had let bitterness burn away everything else. He realized he couldn't let rage sit in the driver's seat. "It was a gradual thing," he told me. "It just didn't hurt as bad. But the truth is, the anger doesn't disappear."

He read all the time. Science fiction was a favorite; it went back to watching *Star Trek* with his stepdad. "As bleak as my reality was, I could always fantasize about the future or pick up a book and be on another planet or be in another time." Ricky also enrolled in classes, and he found a passion for gardening. He liked the whole process—seed to flower, the care and attention and detail—and grew poinsettias for the annual prison sale.

And he maintained his innocence. Five times, he was up for parole. Each time, he'd be considered for release if he admitted what he'd done and expressed remorse. Each time, he'd say he didn't do it. Over the decades,

Ricky wrote to organizations that dealt with wrongful incarceration, including the Ohio Innocence Project.

The Ohio Innocence Project operates out of the University of Cincinnati's law school, and it had a file open on Ricky's case for years. Although the law students felt the inmate was innocent, the case lacked a sturdy legal basis. Vernon, however, was a game changer.

Last March, the Ohio Innocence Project filed a motion for new trial with the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court on behalf of Ricky Jackson. It argued that Vernon's recantation was evidence that would have changed the original trial. The attorneys also filed a motion for post-conviction relief on the basis that Jackson's constitutional rights had been violated in 1975 because the defense didn't know about the pressure placed on Vernon to cooperate.

In a letter Ricky sent me in the following months, his response to the news was gut-wrenching. "Honestly, though, I doubt this will ever be over entirely. How do you shake off something that has been a part of your life for so long?" he wrote from prison. "As much as I might long for some semblance of a 'normal life,' there

are certain realities that I have experienced throughout this whole ordeal that have so profoundly changed the way I look at everything and everybody, I simply have to accept the fact that I will never be happy or completely whole again. They broke something inside of me."

He also knew the odds were against him. Exoneration in wrongful conviction cases is rare: In 2013, 87 people nationwide were cleared of crimes. Ohio has an incentive to fight claims since it compensates wrongfully imprisoned individuals some \$40,000 a year, as well as pays their court costs

and lost wages; the state is also open to legal action by exonerees.

The Truth Comes Out

IRONICALLY, Ricky's case landed in the courtroom of Richard McMonagle. His father, George McMonagle, had presided over the original 1975 trial. As Judge McMonagle's courtroom filled for Jackson's trial on the morning of November 17, 2014, Vernon—a shrunken man in his 50s—entered. At the defendant's table, Ricky, 57, his hands and feet in chains, watched the witness cross the room to take the stand.

The defense attorney took Vernon

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STATES WERE
CLEARED OF
CRIMES.**



"The English language doesn't have the words to express how I'm feeling right now," said Ricky Jackson, here with his lawyers on November 21, the day of his release.

through the day of the crime and his encounters with the police. He admitted that he had not seen the crime and had not picked Ricky and Wiley out of a lineup. After that, he testified, he'd been threatened. "[The detective] said, 'We'll fix it,'" Vernon said, words trickling out between tears. "After that, they took a statement from me that I was scared, that's why I didn't pick them out of the lineup. But I wasn't scared. I didn't pick them out because I knew they didn't do it."

Ricky's attorney, Brian Howe, asked Vernon whether he had seen Ronnie Bridgeman, Wiley Bridgeman, or Ricky Jackson tussling with Franks. No, no, no, answered Vernon.

"How did you feel about testifying about something that you knew wasn't true?" Howe asked.

"I felt really bad about it. Guilty about what I was lying about. I carried all of that," Vernon said.

Ricky's hands were clasped to his face with his eyes shut tight, as the truth was spoken. Finally, he thought.

Justice for All

VERNON'S STINT on the stand ended the next day, and the courtroom was largely empty as the clock swung around to 2:15 that Tuesday afternoon. Suddenly, several lawyers from the state marched in with Cuyahoga county prosecutor Tim McGinty bringing up the rear.

"We are waiving final argument on the issue," McGinty began. "The state, in light of the evidence produced by the defense at this hearing, and the total recantation of the key witness, hereby drops our opposition for a motion for a new trial.

"The state concedes the obvious; it is no longer in a position to retry the case. And as all key witnesses that

PHIL LONG/AP PHOTO

might produce any collateral evidence are no longer living, we do so fully recognizing that the result will be the eventual release of Mr. Jackson and the other codefendant. If the court does grant their motion, which we no longer oppose, we will move for a dismissal today."

There was a pause as the words slid into place: Ricky was getting out.

"All right," McMonagle announced. "Mr. Jackson, we're going to get you back here on Friday, just so that all the paperwork is done."

"Thank you, sir. Thank you. Thank you," Ricky cried, before burying a sobbing head in his hands. When he came up for air, he shook hands with his legal team. Someone pulled out a phone, asking Ricky who he wanted to call. From memory, he recited Kwame's number. "Hello ... Who is this? ... This is Ricky ... Hey, it's over, man ... It's over, bro, I'm coming home ... Friday, man. Friday. Friday ... Be here to get me. Please ... Let everybody know ... I love you."

On Friday, Kwame worked the pedal with a heavy foot as he and his wife, LaShawn, drove to Ricky's 9 a.m. hearing. He hadn't slept in three days. His brother Wiley had been brought to Cleveland on the judge's order, so he might get out as well.

Inside the courtroom, the guards led in Ricky Jackson. His prison jumper was gone, and he was wearing dress slacks and a zip-up argyle

sweater. A smile spread across his face, revealing perfect white teeth. "Life is full of small victories," Judge McMonagle said before closing Ricky's legal case. "This is a big one."

An hour later, Wiley Bridgeman walked free as well.

Ricky paced the holding cell as paperwork was stamped. More waiting in a lifetime of waiting. He didn't know it, but 16 floors below, cameras and reporters clogged the hall where he'd soon take his first free steps. According to the National Registry of Exonerations, Jackson's 39 years is the longest wrongful incarceration term to end in release in American history.

The three boys from Arthur Avenue met at a nearby hotel, all together for the first time in 39 years. Now men, they embraced. Kwame's wife, LaShawn, stepped forward. "Hey there, brother," she said before hugging Ricky.

Lunch was at Red Lobster. Ricky, Kwame, and Wiley bulldozed their feasts. Someone ordered a glass of champagne for Ricky. "Tastes like manna from heaven," he announced.

That night, although they were all exhausted, they drove around the city until 2 a.m. They rolled through their old neighborhood, including Arthur Avenue, abandoned now and drowned in shadow. For Ricky, it was like sci-fi, like getting off one of those ships in *Star Trek*, confronting a strange new world. **R**

WHO ? KNEW



13 Things Gyms Won't Tell You

BY MICHELLE CROUCH

1 We count on you *not* to show up. About 50 percent of people who start an exercise program quit within six months. If more members started coming regularly, it would be chaos in here. Here's a tip to help you stick with it: Start slow. People who quit typically push themselves too hard at first and get discouraged.

2 It's often cheaper to pay per visit. Economists at the University of California, Berkeley, found that the average gym user who enrolls in a

monthly or annual membership pays 70 percent more—about \$300 more a year—than those who pay per visit.

3 Many of you use the treadmills totally wrong. Holding on for balance is OK, but some people support almost all their body weight on their arms. That's unsafe—and it prevents you from burning as many calories. If you can't manage to loosen your grip, try slowing down.

4 What's hot right now? Functional fitness, or doing exercises that help you in everyday life, which is

important for older adults hoping to prevent injury. That means fewer exercises like leg extensions, a movement you likely will never do outside the gym, and more multi-joint, full-body exercises (like squats) that strengthen you for real-life activities like lifting heavy boxes.

5 Don't drop your kid off at our day-care and leave the premises. It's just rude—and it's against our rules. If you want to get your nails done or go shopping, hire a babysitter.

6 Enjoy the free personal-training session when you join. But if your trainer shows you complex exercises and doesn't write anything down, it might be per management orders. The goal: to make exercise seem complicated so you buy training sessions.

7 Patience, people! TV shows may give you the idea that you can lose 25 pounds and transform your body in a few weeks, but unless you're spending eight hours a day in the gym, that's just not reality. Stick with us for three months, and you will see a noticeable difference in your physique.

8 Beware the smoothie station. Some smoothies pack as many as 500 calories, which may negate the workout you just did. Plus, we sell those products at a big markup. You can save money—and calories—by making them at home.

9 Want us to offer a class at a different time? That's great. But we won't create a new class just because one person asks; we need about 12 people to come regularly to make it work. Get a group of coworkers or friends who are interested, and request it together.

10 Members can be unbelievably territorial. Once, I was teaching a spin class when two people came in late and saw other members on their reserved bikes. They started yelling and pulling the people off. It was like a scene out of a movie.

11 See those bottles of disinfectant spray and paper towels? They're not there for decoration. Please wipe down your sweaty machine after you use it. One poll found that 74 percent of gym-goers notice other members skipping post-workout wipe downs.

12 Don't automatically pay the initiation fee. Most of the time, it's completely negotiable.

13 What I look for in a gym: a friendly front-desk staff, which tells me it's well managed, and a high-quality rug just inside the front door, which means the gym takes cleanliness seriously. **R**

Sources: Tom Holland, MS, CSCS, former gym owner and author of *Beat the Gym*; Tiffany Richards, former employee at a fitness chain; Charlie Sims, owner of a CrossFit gym in Louisville, Kentucky; Jim Thornton, MA, ATC, CES, president of the National Athletic Trainers' Association; and economist Stefano DellaVigna, who studied gym users for three years

LOOK

TWICE ...

... What do you see? No, that fuzzy bump on the leaf isn't chest hair. It isn't part of the leaf at all—it's just trying to look that way. Native to India and Southeast Asia, the common baron caterpillar is one of nature's best-camouflaged vegetarians. A central yellow stripe and branch-like spinal growths keep the baron invisible to birds and free to feed on mango leaves like this one. Look while you can: With camouflage this good, it's only a matter of time before the caterpillar grows into a baron butterfly.

CONNOR SANDLAND/MALAYSIA





The Danger Of Eating Late at Night

BY JAMIE A. KOUFMAN, MD FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

✎ TYPICAL WAS the restaurateur who came to see me with symptoms of heartburn—as well as postnasal drip, sinus disease, hoarseness, and a chronic cough. He reported that he always left his restaurant at 11 p.m. After he arrived home, he would eat dinner and then go to bed.

His problem was acid reflux—an epidemic that affects as many as 40 percent of Americans, a marked increase in recent decades.

I specialize in the diagnosis and management of acid reflux, especially “silent” airway reflux, which often affects the throat, sinuses, and lungs without digestive symptoms

like heartburn. Reflux can lead to esophageal cancer, which has increased by about 500 percent since the 1970s. The drugs we use to treat reflux, called proton pump inhibitors, don’t always work and may even increase the risk of developing esophageal cancer when used long term, according to a Danish study.

What is responsible for these disturbing developments? For one, our poor diet, with its huge increases in the consumption of sugar, fat, soft drinks, and processed foods. But another important variable has been overlooked: dinnertime. Over the past two decades, the time of my

patients' evening meals has trended later and later. Dinner—already pushed back by longer work hours—is often further delayed by activities such as shopping and exercise.

In my experience, the single most important intervention for reflux is to eliminate late eating.

For my patients, eating late is often accompanied by overindulging because many skip breakfast and consume only a sandwich at lunch. Thus the evening meal becomes the largest meal of the day. After that heavy meal, it's off to the sofa to watch television. But after eating, it's important to stay upright because gravity helps keep food in the stomach. Reflux is the result of acid spilling out of the stomach; lying down with a full stomach makes reflux much more likely. In a healthy young person, the stomach normally takes a few hours to empty after a moderate-size meal. In older people or those who have reflux, gastric emptying is often delayed.

And if you add an after-dinner dessert or a bedtime snack? Again, reflux is a natural consequence. Dessert calories tend to be high in carbohydrates and fat, and high-fat foods often create reflux by slowing digestion and relaxing the stomach valve that normally prevents the condition. If your reflux is the silent variety, it's easy to mistake for such conditions as sinusitis, allergies, and asthma.

Some of my reflux patients already eat well. For them, dining too late is

often the sole cause of their problem. And yet, changing the timing of their meals is a challenge they struggle to meet.

A patient with reflux came to see me because her father and uncle died of esophageal cancer, and she was afraid of getting it too. Her nightly routine included a 9 p.m. dinner with at least two bottles of good red wine for the table. The reflux was serious, and changes were needed.

She listened, then did not come back to see me for a year. "For the first two months, I just hated you," she told me, "and then for the next two months—I was having some trouble swallowing—I figured I was going to die of esophageal cancer." Then she nudged me and added, "You know, we're the reason that it's not so easy to get 6 p.m. reservations at the good restaurants anymore."

To stop the remarkable increase in reflux disease, we have to stop eating at least three hours before bed. For many people, eating dinner early is a significant lifestyle shift. It will require healthy, well-planned breakfasts, lunches, and snacks.

As for my restaurateur patient? I told him to eat dinner before 7 p.m. Within six weeks, his reflux was gone.



Dr. Koufman is a physician in New York City who specializes in acid reflux and voice disorders.

Is your **BLADDER** **CALLING THE** **SHOTS?**



Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) is approved by the FDA to treat overactive bladder (OAB) symptoms of urgency, frequency and leakage:



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Subject to eligibility. Restrictions may apply.



Important Safety Information

Myrbetriq may increase your blood pressure, which should be checked by your doctor during treatment.

Use of MYRBETRIQ (meer-BEH-trick)

Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) is a prescription medicine for adults used to treat overactive bladder with symptoms of urgency, frequency, and leakage.

Important Safety Information (continued)

Myrbetriq may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including medications for overactive bladder or other medicines such as thioridazine (Mellaril® and Mellaril S®), flecainide (Tambocor™), propafenone (Rythmol®), digoxin (Lanoxin®).^{*} Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Before taking Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney problems. In clinical studies, the most common side effects seen with Myrbetriq included increased blood pressure, common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis), urinary tract infection and headache.

Please see Brief Summary of Prescribing Information for Myrbetriq (mirabegron) on following page.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.



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Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) extended-release tablets 25 mg, 50 mg

Brief Summary based on FDA-approved patient labeling

Read the Patient Information that comes with Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This summary does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or treatment.

What is Myrbetriq (meer-BEH-trick)?

Myrbetriq is a prescription medication for **adults** used to treat the following symptoms due to a condition called **overactive bladder**:

- urge urinary incontinence: a strong need to urinate with leaking or wetting accidents
- urgency: a strong need to urinate right away
- frequency: urinating often

It is not known if Myrbetriq is safe and effective in children.

What is overactive bladder?

Overactive bladder occurs when you cannot control your bladder contractions. When these muscle contractions happen too often or cannot be controlled, you can get symptoms of overactive bladder, which are urinary frequency, urinary urgency, and urinary incontinence (leakage).

What should I tell my doctor before taking Myrbetriq?

Before you take Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you:

- have liver problems or kidney problems
- have very high uncontrolled blood pressure
- have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if Myrbetriq will harm your unborn baby. Talk to your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if Myrbetriq passes into your breast milk. You and your doctor should decide if you will take Myrbetriq or breastfeed. You should not do both.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take,

including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Tell your doctor if you take:

- thioridazine (Mellaril® or Mellaril-S®)*
- flecainide (Tambocor™)
- propafenone (Rythmol®)
- digoxin (Lanoxin®)

How should I take Myrbetriq?

- Take Myrbetriq exactly as your doctor tells you to take it.
- You should take 1 Myrbetriq tablet 1 time a day.
- You should take Myrbetriq with water and swallow the tablet whole.
- Do not crush or chew the tablet.
- You can take Myrbetriq with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of Myrbetriq, begin taking Myrbetriq again the next day. Do not take 2 doses of Myrbetriq the same day.
- If you take too much Myrbetriq, call your doctor or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

What are the possible side effects of Myrbetriq?

Myrbetriq may cause serious side effects including:

- **increased blood pressure.** Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq.
- **inability to empty your bladder (urinary retention).** Myrbetriq may increase your chances of

not being able to empty your bladder if you have bladder outlet obstruction or if you are taking other medicines to treat overactive bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you are unable to empty your bladder.

The **most common side effects** of Myrbetriq include:

- increased blood pressure
- common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis)
- urinary tract infection
- headache

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away or if you have hives, skin rash or itching while taking Myrbetriq.

These are not all the possible side effects of Myrbetriq.

For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store Myrbetriq?

- Store Myrbetriq between 59°F to 86°F (15°C to 30°C). Keep the bottle closed.
- Safely throw away medicine that is out of date or no longer needed.

Keep Myrbetriq and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about the safe and effective use of Myrbetriq

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in the Patient Information leaflet. Do not use Myrbetriq for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give Myrbetriq to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

Where can I go for more information?

This is a summary of the most important information about Myrbetriq. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about Myrbetriq that is written for health professionals.

For more information, visit **www.Myrbetriq.com** or call (800) 727-7003.

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25 mg, 50 mg

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Does Life Cost More for Men or Women?

BY HANNAH K. GOLD
FROM ALTERNET.ORG

RESEARCHERS IN CALIFORNIA once discovered that women in that state annually pay around \$1,351 more than men for basic services—adding up to about \$15 billion a year nationwide. But discrimination in pricing works both ways: Men can get overcharged too. Here are seven occasions where it's advantageous to be a man, or a woman.

Car Insurance COSTS MORE FOR: **Men**

When it comes to car insurance, men are better off saving money by switching their gender than they are switching to GEICO. Women are generally offered better deals because

they drive less and get in fewer accidents than men, who take greater risks behind the wheel and make up the vast majority of DUIs. In 2012, the FBI reported that 743,029 men were arrested for drunk driving, compared with just 244,195 women.

PROP STYLIST: SARAH CAVE FOR EH MANAGEMENT

New Cars and Their Parts **COST MORE FOR: Women**

Women, on the other hand, are often given a raw deal at the dealership and the repair shop. One study in Chicago found that new car dealerships asked white women to pay 40 percent more of a markup than white men, while black women were asked to pay upward of three times a white male's markup. Similarly, auto-repair shops are prone to overcharge women, according to a 2012 report that surveyed 4,600 body shops. Women were quoted an average price of \$406 to replace a car radiator, compared with the \$383 their male counterparts were offered for the same service. Women who expressed limited knowledge of car-part pricing, in particular, were charged more than men with the same level of knowledge.

Beauty Products **COST MORE FOR: Women**

In a recent article for *bustle.com*, author Amanda Chatel tracked down several beauty products made by the same company—nearly identical for all intents and purposes—that are priced differently depending on whom they are marketed to. For example, Head & Shoulders makes an anti-dandruff two-in-one shampoo and conditioner for women priced at \$10.99. A very similar product with an extra Old Spice kick for men costs only \$7.99. Razors also charge women

a markup: \$9.49 for the rugged Gillette Mach3 HD Men's Razor, \$13.79 for the Gillette Venus Embrace.

Nail Salons **COST MORE FOR: Men**

On average, American men spend \$37.14 for a single manicure compared with women's \$24.38. The reason? Businesses that charge more for men's manis argue that male hands are generally larger and rougher, and take longer to manicure, than women's. More labor and more product means higher prices (this same logic is why women's haircuts can cost three times as much as men's).

Dry Cleaning **COSTS MORE FOR: Women**

It's common practice for dry cleaners to charge different prices for men's and women's clothing. The fight for gender equity at the dry cleaner has been spearheaded, in large part, by Janet Floyd, a cofounder of a market research firm in New York City and a starched-shirt owner. Floyd found that her local dry cleaner was charging \$2 for men's "shirts" and \$6.50 for women's "blouses," insisting that the distinction in terms gave them the right to more than triple the price. New York City's Department of Consumer Affairs has stricter ordinances, at least: Prices can differentiate between shirts with and without ruffles, but not between "shirts" and "blouses."

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WHO KNEW?

Nightclubs and Bars COST MORE FOR: Men

Bars that dish out “ladies’ nights” discounts for women and cover charges for men are participating in a decades-old American tradition, which has sparked some controversy. Some feminists have been skeptical of the practice—which, though it can help women financially, was implemented for the benefit of men—but it’s men, and men’s rights activists in particular, who are most vocally opposed to it. In 1998, for example, New Jersey resident David Gillespie filed a civil rights complaint against the Coastline Restaurant, which allowed women free entry (a savings of \$5) and drink discounts on ladies’ night. Because of this, New Jersey outlawed ladies’ nights in 2004.

Long-Term Care COSTS MORE FOR: Women

In 2013, several big insurance companies, including Genworth Financial, started charging women higher rates than men for the same long-term care. The insurance companies’ rationale? Women live longer than men and are presumably greater liabilities to potential profits. But it’s not just Genworth: A 2012 report by the National Women’s Law Center found that more than 90 percent of America’s bestselling health-care plans charge men less than women. **R**

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IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

Each week, the folks at merriam-webster.com highlight a word that's in the news. Here's a recent sampling from their Trend Watch section. Test yourself to see how current you are, and then check the next page for answers.

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

1. amnesty ('am-neh-stee) *n.*—
A: treason. B: pardon. C: safe haven.

2. harridan ('har-eh-den) *n.*—
A: brief, wild storm. B: mercenary
soldier. C: haggard, old woman.

3. repudiate (rih-'pyu-dee-ayt) *v.*—
A: overthrow. B: refuse to accept or
support. C: divulge.

4. indict (en-'diyt) *v.*—A: point out.
B: charge with a crime. C: vote.

5. gentrification (jen-treh-feh-
'kay-shehn) *n.*—A: gender switch.
B: uncultured upbringing.
C: displacement of the poor by
the affluent.

6. sovereignty ('sahv-er-en-tee)
n.—A: full knowledge. B: supreme
power. C: communal state.

7. conflate (kon-'flayt) *v.*—A: barter
or deal. B: ignore. C: confuse or
combine into a whole.

8. solipsistic (soh-lep-'sis-tik) *adj.*—
A: highly egocentric. B: slick.
C: applied to the lips.

9. intransigence (in-'tran-sih-jents)
n.—A: stubbornness. B: hard travel.
C: secret information.

10. subterfuge ('sub-ter-fyewj) *n.*—
A: deceptive stratagem. B: underwater
dwelling. C: cheap replica.

11. inherent (in-'hir-ent) *adj.*—
A: inborn. B: granted by a will.
C: leased for low cost.

12. eponymous (ih-'pah-neh-mes)
adj.—A: unsigned. B: opposite in
meaning. C: named for a person.

13. intrepid (in-'treh-pid) *adj.*—
A: stumbling. B: unpleasantly hot.
C: fearless.

14. sectarian (sek-'ter-ee-an) *adj.*—
A: related to a horse. B: of religious
factions. C: having six parts.

15. culpable ('kuhl-peh-buhl) *adj.*—
A: blameworthy. B: likely to happen.
C: not competent.

 *To play an interactive version of
Word Power on your iPad, download the
Reader's Digest app.*

Answers

1. amnesty—[B] pardon. President Obama's deportation *amnesty* is a key controversy across the nation.

2. harridan—[C] haggard, old woman. During trial, former Virginia governor Bob McDonnell portrayed his wife as a *harridan*, said the *New York Times*.

3. repudiate—[B] refuse to accept or support. After the midterm elections, Senator Paul said, "Tonight is a *repudiation* of Barack Obama's policies."

4. indict—[B] charge with a crime. Darren Wilson was not *indicted* for the killing of Michael Brown.

5. gentrification—[C] displacement of the poor by the affluent. Spike Lee has denounced the *gentrification* in neighborhoods such as Fort Greene.

6. sovereignty—[B] supreme power. Ukraine will not settle its conflicts with Russia until it regains full *sovereignty* over Crimea.

7. conflate—[C] confuse or combine into a whole. Newsman Brian Williams doesn't know what caused him to "*conflate* one aircraft with another."

8. solipsistic—[A] highly egocentric. Some view Facebook as a simply *solipsistic* forum.

9. intransigence—[A] stubbornness. The government shutdown was a display of *intransigence*, said the *Los Angeles Times*.

10. subterfuge—[A] deceptive stratagem. Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi said the Republicans' intent to sue the president was a "*subterfuge*."

11. inherent—[A] inborn. When the Declaration of Independence refers to "unalienable" rights, it is describing the *inherent* privileges people are entitled to.

12. eponymous—[C] named for a person. Who was the original Oscar behind the *eponymous* statuette?

13. intrepid—[C] fearless. After "stealing" a block while playing, Prince George was called "very *intrepid*."

14. sectarian—[B] of religious factions. The UN has warned of "further *sectarian* violence" in Iraq.

15. culpable—[A] blameworthy. Oscar Pistorius was found guilty of *culpable* homicide in South Africa.

WHY WE CAST ABOUT

The word *cast* has its roots in Middle English via the Old Norse *kasta*, meaning "to throw." This is close to the modern definition of "to put forth." So it makes sense that now a newscaster can broadcast the forecast.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

9 & below: Up-to-date

10-12: In the know

13-15: Newshound

Humor in Uniform



"I had no idea we had this kind of technology."

STUDENTS ARE GREAT about sending our troops letters, and the troops love 'em. You can see why:

■ "Dear Soldier, If you're having a rough day, remember the most important thing in life is to be yourself. Unless you can be Batman."

■ "Dear Veterans, You rock more than AC/DC or Metallica or Red Hot Chili Peppers."

■ "I am so happy you are risking your life for the USA! My grandpa Bob was in the Navy. Now he likes peanuts."

Source: uniformstories.com

IT WAS SHEER BRILLIANCE. The ship's operations officer entered the messdeck, his eyes bleary and at half-mast. He grabbed a bagel and took a seat. Unfortunately, the sun was shining through a porthole right onto his face. Rather than move, he called the bridge: "Hey," he said, "can you shift the ship 15 degrees? Thanks."

Source: abovetopsecret.com

Send us your funniest military anecdote or news story—it might be worth \$100! Go to rd.com/submit for details.

Quotable Quotes



It is more fun to be the painter than the paint.

GEORGE CLOONEY



A MOTHER IS NOT A PERSON TO LEAN ON BUT A PERSON TO MAKE LEANING UNNECESSARY.

DOROTHY C. FISHER, author

When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what the storm's all about.

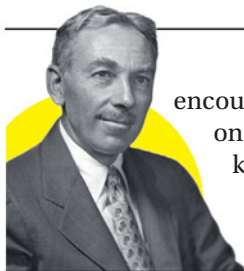
HARUKI MURAKAMI, author

Art is how we decorate space; music is how we decorate time.

Quoted by ALEX CLAY HUTCHINGS on reddit.com

WHEN THE WHOLE WORLD IS SILENT, EVEN ONE VOICE BECOMES POWERFUL.

MALALA YOUSAFZAI



I am still encouraged to go on. I wouldn't know where else to go.

E. B. WHITE

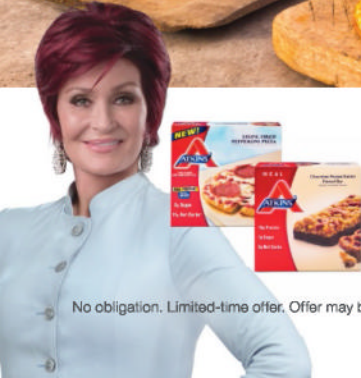
The Eskimos had 52 names for snow because it was important to them; there ought to be as many for love. MARGARET ATWOOD

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